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Commercial kitchens ...  
Back-of-house  
essentials

Supply chain ...  
**Embracing last-mile logistics.**  
**Guide to Warehouse  
Management Systems.**

Delight your customers  
**Turn R3 million  
into R90 000**

Storewatch  
**Kesko: The  
Finnish  
model**







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Image: /www.vecteezy.com/

## FEATURES

### Supply chain: Embracing last-mile logistics

The global average cost of last-mile logistics delivery accounts for 41% of the total delivery cost. Businesses need to continuously research their target markets to understand the specific conditions when delivering logistics solutions.



Image: <https://marsner.com/>

### Supply chain: Complete WMS guide

Warehouse Management Systems (WMS) helps supermarket retailers manage their inventory more effectively, streamline operations, reduce costs, enhance customer satisfaction, and adapt to changing demands and regulations.

### Back-of-house essential kitchen equipment

Futureproofing your back of house – including hot and cold kitchen, pantries and storage areas – is an important step in ensuring the sustainability of your business. This means that flexible, multifunctional, and efficient design is essential.



Georges Auguste Escoffier  
[www.wekivaculinary.org](http://www.wekivaculinary.org)

<https://biowatch.org.za/>



### Grains & pulses stay relevant in SA

Grains and pulses significance cannot be underestimated – for those eating more plant-based food, for vegans and vegetarians, as side dishes to meat, fish and poultry, as staple favourites, for budget-friendly nutrition, and for basic subsistence for those who are not food secure.



<https://en.wikipedia.org/>

## STOREWATCH

### Kesko, Finland

In Scandinavian and Baltic countries, Kesko stands out among all commercial chains. It offers an

ethical vision of shopping, ensures quality goods and services. As an advanced country, Finland has a solid and constantly expanding economy.

## COLUMNS

### Delight your customers

Aki Kalliatakis talks about the reality of customers' perceptions, where logic plays no role, against spreadsheet decisions. When magic is removed, boardroom resolutions don't always translate into better circumstances.



[www.quora.com/](http://www.quora.com/)

## NEWS

### SA port congestion

An analysis of the World Bank CPPI report addressing operational efficiency in SA ports.

### Bitcoin's meteoric rise



<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/>

Bitcoin's return on investment has dwarfed traditional financial instruments. This sort of growth seems like a good analogy for rewarding top corporate executives who drive exponential growth in their companies.

### Growing e-commerce market

Good for consumers, but will proudly South African brands rise to the international challenge?





Serves: 4  
Preparation time: 6 hours 35 minutes  
Cooking time: 30 minutes

## GOLDI, COUNTY FAIR, FESTIVE or MOUNTAIN VALLEY DRUMSTICKS & THIGHS

### INGREDIENTS

#### Chicken:

500ml amasi  
30ml lemon juice  
15ml lemon zest  
4 garlic cloves, finely grated  
15g parsley, roughly chopped  
5ml salt  
5ml black pepper  
4 drumsticks, 4 thighs

### INGREDIENTS

#### Bean salad:

500g green beans, trimmed  
10ml olive oil  
salt and pepper  
5ml lemon zest  
10g parsley, chopped  
100g feta cheese, crumbled  
30g almond flakes, toasted



Tasty & Delicious

Ideal for a family meal

## AMASI, LEMON AND GARLIC CHICKEN WITH BEAN SALAD

For something a little different, plan ahead and marinate your braai chicken in lemon-and-herb amasi.

### Method:

#### Chicken

In a bowl, whisk together the amasi, lemon juice, zest, garlic, parsley, salt and pepper.  
Add the chicken and gently mix until evenly coated.  
Place in the fridge and allow to marinate for six hours, or preferably overnight.  
Once marinated, remove the chicken from the marinade, wiping off the excess.  
Cook over a medium-heat grill or braai, until crispy and cooked through.

#### Bean salad

Bring a pot of salted water to the boil.  
Add the beans and allow them to simmer for 1-2 minutes until soft (but they should still have a bit of crunch).  
Remove the beans from the boiling water and place them straight into a bowl of ice water.  
Once they've cooled, allow to drain and pat dry.  
Mix the olive oil, a pinch of salt and pepper, zest and parsley together. Toss this through the beans.  
Place the beans on a serving dish, topped with feta cheese and almond flakes.  
Serve the chicken warm with lemon wedges and bean salad on the side.

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# What gives you the edge in business?



Helen Maister

**W**hat gives a retailer the edge in this highly competitive industry is its ability to understand and anticipate customer needs, offer superior product quality and variety, maintain competitive pricing, ensure continuous and convenient supply and an efficient shopping experience, while leveraging technology

to streamline operations and enhance customer engagement and loyalty.

## Embracing last-mile logistics

Smart. It's a word most people aspire to be associated with. However, this buzzword of our times is no longer just a description for clever individuals. It has become critical for success in any industry or business. From smart homes to smart cities, smart now signifies the era of technical sophistication in which we operate, encompassing sustainability and eco-friendliness. It is a concept that is reshaping our world.

Staying competitive in today's rapidly evolving landscape requires businesses and individuals to

embrace smart – smart thoughts and smart solutions. This principle is just as vital for the last mile – a crucial transport leg that can make or break a supply chain.

## Guide to Warehouse Management Systems

The lingering impacts of inflation, continued e-commerce growth and the return of the store shopping experience are having a significant impact on today's supermarkets. Retailers must continue to innovate to delight their customers, and many are turning to technology and automation to remain competitive.

## Back-of-house commercial kitchen equipment

It's important to consider all your equipment needs when designing and planning a retail or wholesale back-of-house. This is particularly true for speciality areas such as deli, butchery, bakery, fishmonger and cheese counter, which contribute significantly to feet through the door, loyalty and creating a destination shop.

In addition, the equipment used in commercial back-of-house kitchens, pantry and storage areas is undergoing an evolution, with appliances being linked to the internet and kitchen automation software reducing accidents, lowering losses, and increasing revenue. As time pressure, space limitations and energy cost and supply pressures increase, so do

the demands on a commercial kitchen. Future-proofing your back of house – including hot and cold kitchen, pantries and storage areas – is an important step in ensuring the sustainability of your business. This means that flexible, multifunctional and efficient design is essential.

## Grains & pulses stay consistently relevant in SA

Wheat and maize remain staple products for South African consumers. Given their versatility, this is unsurprising and they, along with other grains and pulses, continue to find their way into millions of shopping baskets across the country. Innovative and exciting products drive renewed interest in these categories, while tried and tested favourites remain the basis for most sales.

The multiplicity of options alone keeps these categories relevant. From dried and canned pulses such as peas, beans, lentils and chickpeas, traditional maize favourites, instant maize porridges in a variety of flavours, a massive range of grain-based cereals, rough-milled grains, speciality flours, heat and eat rice pouches, traditional and new-school maize meal options, and basic bread to artisanal bread loaves, the choices for consumers are endless.

*Helen Maister*

Helen Maister



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# DATA-DRIVEN HIRING

## UNLOCKING THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE SME RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

**SMEs** play a crucial role in most economies, and South Africa is no exception. They are also important contributors to job creation and global economic development. According to the World Bank Group SMEs represent about 90% of businesses worldwide, while the International Finance Corporation revealed that roughly 50% to 60% of South Africa's workforce finds employment within SMEs.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WAREHOUSING & LOGISTICS RECRUITMENT SPACE?

Since 2019, Warehousing & Logistics has remained in the top 10 in-demand job sectors. On average, people stay in Warehousing & Logistics jobs for 3 years. This is higher than the average tenure in South Africa across all sectors (2 years and 4 months). 33.1% of candidates in this sector have a tertiary qualification; 53.8% of candidates are willing to relocate, with 60.3% currently residing in Gauteng; and 60.3% are employment equity candidates.

### OVERCOMING COMMON RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES

Despite needing to attract and retain skilled talent, SMEs often face three major recruitment challenges:

**Time-to-hire:** Time is a critical factor for all SMEs during the recruitment process, but particularly so for those within the Warehousing & Logistics sector. Due to the nature of the industry, it's important to fill roles as quickly as possible in order to mitigate downtime in procurement and supply.

Sourcing candidates directly using job-matching technology streamlines the hiring process so that SMEs can quickly reach more jobseekers. SMEs can advertise their vacancies directly to active jobseekers or tap into a database of professional candidates. Sophisticated platforms like Pnet's online recruitment portal offer a host of easy-to-use tools and features to filter and shortlist suitable candidates from its database of over 6 million jobseekers. What's more, recruiters' job ads get further reach from the 100 million Job Alerts that Pnet sends directly to jobseekers' inboxes every month.

**High recruitment costs:** Due to the need for specialised skills companies tend to lean on the likes of recruitment agencies or headhunters, inflating the cost of talent as a result of retainer fees or placement fees.

By going directly to **Pnet** to source suitable candidates, SMEs can save up to 60% on their recruitment costs. Pnet uses advanced algorithms

and analytics to target job advertisements to the most relevant candidates. This enables recruiters to find quality candidates using locally relevant filters and create talent pools to access when they need to hire for similar roles in the future.

**Inadequate personnel to focus on the recruitment process:** SMEs often do not have the luxury of a dedicated resource to handle their hiring activity, so sifting through CVs, shortlisting candidates and conducting interviews can feel overwhelming. Pnet's expert "Response Handling" Team can help source quality matches for your vacancies - they know how to input your job description to attract candidates to your job ad and can create suitable shortlists on your behalf so that you can get on with your core business activities.

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**As South Africa's leading online recruitment platform, Pnet is well positioned to help SMEs find the right candidates for their vacant roles, thereby boosting their competitiveness in the market. In fact, Pnet has become a gamechanger for companies of all sizes, allowing them to flourish by attracting and retaining their most important asset – People.**

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At Pnet, our purpose is "The Right Job for Everyone". By partnering with Pnet, businesses can find the right person for the job, at the right time, and at the right cost – enabling them to attract quality talent that drives their business growth and success. ■



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# How to Turn R3 million into R90 000

How behavioural economics and 'being human' affects your business.

By Aki Kalliatakis

Apparently the old Roman Baths in Bath, England, are England's second most visited tourist attraction, and just like in many other fountains around the world, visitors would throw in old coins and make a wish. The result was that they managed to collect a lot of money each year.

But coins thrown in the baths did damage, and every once in a while they would have to be drained and the coins collected.

So the sensible managers banned the practice. Instead, in April 2022 they installed a cash box, and also asked that people used a 'contactless payment' option with their credit cards and 'phones.

Most customers chose to not donate, and funds collected dropped to a measly £4 000.

What the 'sensible' managers did with their very rational and logical decision, which possibly included a spreadsheet or some AI, was that they failed to grasp was that ...

“ In the real, magical, superstitious world of customers, logic plays no role. And in the real world they paid with real-world consequences. Decisions made in boardrooms don't always translate into better circumstances, especially when magic is removed. ”



**The way tourists throw coins in the baths is essential to 'make a wish' behaviour. People are not making a donation – they are throwing their aspirations and desires out into the world.**

© Bath Tourism Plus. Source: [www.visitbath.co.uk](http://www.visitbath.co.uk)

Human beings live in a world of fantasy, and it's clear from this example that not all payment methods are the same. The extrinsic and intrinsic value of the coins doesn't change except in the perceptions of people. Thus, the way that they threw the coins in the baths was essential to the 'make a wish' behaviour. People weren't making a donation – they were throwing their aspirations and desires out into the world.

It's the same as sending a wedding invitation in an email or buying expensive dog food for your pet. An emailed invitation diminishes the value of the

special event, and your dog doesn't know the difference, because for Buddy food is just food. And there are many other examples of this in your business.

To come back to the coin tosses into the baths, there are also other behavioural and psychological principles at play here.

For example, we are herd-like in our behaviour, and if we see other people tossing coins into the bath,

we are likely to do the same. Not only that, but there is also the pressure of social proof and competition when other people see you being generous. What the point of tapping your card if nobody else sees it?

Why do businesses make decisions like this one without thinking it through properly? Part of it is that senior people are trained as 'scientists' or economists, and we are, in the western world, taught to win arguments, not to do what is intuitively right.

How do you solve that dilemma?



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Start by asking open-ended questions rather than questions where there is only one answer. This gives us more space to come up with more innovative solutions. For example, if Disney were asked to redesign the airport experience, what would change? Or if banks hired hospitality managers from restaurants and hotels, would that improve client experiences?

It's the same with the Roman Baths: you could solve your problem with coin damage, and perhaps even increase the amount of money that people throw in, by implementing little nudges to encourage fun of throwing coins into the right places, and subtle signs directing people to a particularly attractive fountain.

In real life there are rarely solutions to questions that are close to matric exam maths questions. You know the story: "If a bus leaves Pretoria travelling south on the N1 highway at a steady 100 km/h, and another bus leaves Johannesburg travelling north at the same time travelling at 80 km/hour, at what point will they meet?"



The tradition behind tossing coins into the Trevi Fountain comes from an ancient Roman practice of tossing a coin into a river or ocean to ensure that the gods who ruled these bodies of water will grant you safe passage. Traditionally you stand with your back to the Trevi Fountain and use your right hand to toss a coin over your left shoulder. This will apparently ensure good luck and that you will return to Rome in the future. If you have another two coins on hand, throwing the second coin into the Trevi Fountain will let you meet the love of your life, while the third coin will have wedding bells ringing. Photo & caption: [www.tripadvisor.in/](http://www.tripadvisor.in/)

How many times is there a traffic jam? What if the driver had to stop for a pee? That's what happens in real life.

Another thing you can do to prevent this type of thinking is to get creative people like marketers, some of your staff, and a few of your customers together to come up with a bunch of great new, weird and whacky ideas. (Then implement them, but never, ever have them run past the finance team.)

Sadly, top managers in most companies try whatever they can to make real people like customers and staff anonymous, when in fact we should be taking care of them and loving

them. So they reduce everything to numbers in a spreadsheet instead of Koos and Busisiwe, who have families that depend on them, and whose happiness lies in our hands.

Don't get me wrong. Efficiency and productivity are important, but sometimes we also know that we need to focus on effectiveness. Rather than trying to change the world through science and logic, we need get a deep visceral understanding of what drives them, and then change how people see and perceive your business.

We don't have to mistreat people to make money, and the opposite is true: treating them well pays off big time.



<https://www.quora.com/>

**Your dog doesn't know that you've bought expensive food for him because, for Buddy, food is just food.**





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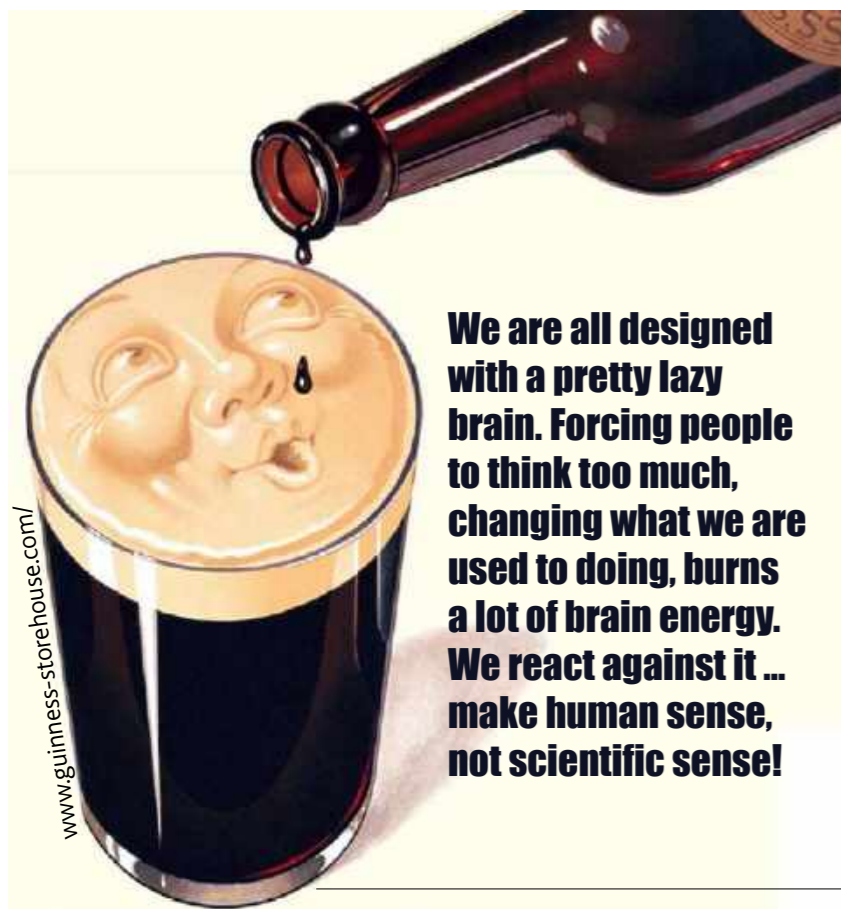
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**We are all designed with a pretty lazy brain. Forcing people to think too much, changing what we are used to doing, burns a lot of brain energy. We react against it ... make human sense, not scientific sense!**

Indeed, you can even turn a negative into a positive. Guinness beer is apparently really hard to pour for bartenders, and they hate doing it because it takes so long. So what did Guinness do? They changed their slogan to, "Good things come to all those who wait."

Remember, no matter who your customers are and how clever they are, we are all designed with a pretty lazy brain. Forcing people to think

too much, changing what they are used to doing, no matter how superstitious, burns a lot of brain energy. We react against it, and it's far better to make sure that we avoid this and make sure that everything we do is clear and makes human sense, not scientific sense.

In the coin toss example, decision paralysis also contributes: if people are faced with a decision to do something odd or unusual from what they normally do, doing nothing is probably going to be the result. Even though that may be worse than any other choice.

**Make life easy. The people around you will thank you for that ... and so will your bank balances. SR**



Aki Kalliatakis is the managing partner of The Leadership LaunchPad, a company dedicated to helping clients become more customer driven. He can be contacted at +27 (0) 83 379 3466, or via the website at [www.leadershiplaunchpad.co.za](http://www.leadershiplaunchpad.co.za)

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# Embracing last-mile logistics for successful supply chains

Image: /www.vecteezy.com/

**S**mart. It's a word most people aspire to be associated with. However, this buzzword of our times is no longer just a description for clever individuals. It has become critical for success in any industry or business. From smart homes to smart cities, smart now signifies the era of technical sophistication in which we operate, encompassing sustainability and eco-friendliness. It is a concept that is reshaping our world. Staying competitive in today's rapidly evolving landscape requires businesses and individuals to embrace smart – smart thoughts and smart solutions. This principle is just as vital for the last mile – a crucial transport leg that can make or break a supply chain.

A study by leading consulting firm Deloitte found that the global average cost of last-mile logistics delivery accounts for 41% of the total delivery cost. The study found that worldwide there has been a deeper integration of intelligent technologies that has in turn resulted in a booming development of smart last-mile logistics solutions – all happening amidst ongoing efforts of improved efficiency and cost reduction. In this fast-changing technology landscape, Deloitte advises businesses to now continuously analyse and research their target markets to understand the specific conditions for which they are delivering logistics solutions. Beyond that, a clear and comprehensive



Oliver Naidoo

strategy for smart last-mile logistics is essential if enterprises are to meet the expectations of these target markets, the study found.

Oliver Naidoo, Managing Director of JC Auditors, says last-mile logistics has been evolving as rapidly in the South African retail sector as everywhere else in the world, driven by the need for speed, efficiency, and sustainability. He says ...

“Key trends include the rise of same-day and almost instant delivery options, the strategic use of dedicated fulfilment centres, and the integration of innovative delivery models.”

“Leading local companies like Takealot, Checkers, Pick n Pay and Woolworths are spearheading these initiatives. Furthermore, there is a growing emphasis on sustainability initiatives such as



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4-way Combilifts work as counterbalancers, sideloaders, and narrow-aisle forklifts. The Combi-SC (Straddle Carrier) is the most cost effective solution for the handling of containers and oversized loads. With the ability to operate in very narrow aisles, VNA, in the warehouse – as narrow as 1.6m – the Aisle-Master articulated forklift increases and maximises storage capacity.

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electric vehicles and optimised routing to minimise delivery costs and reduce carbon footprints.”



Renko Bergh

According to Renko Bergh, co-founder of CtrlFleet, understanding the final step in delivering goods is crucial for supply chain efficiency. He explains ...

“ Regarding the last mile, everyone wants to receive their orders as quickly as possible. Retailers are increasingly

making efforts to optimise this stage. It is much more important than it seems at first glance. If a company fails in last-mile delivery, it can expect its customers to switch to a more successful competitor in this regard. ”

Recent polls show that about 65% of buyers want to track their parcels online and expect this to become available for all shipments. Companies already implementing online tracking have reduced logistics costs by approximately 20%.

“Why is this feature in such demand? In most cases, buyers want to know the exact delivery times, and online tracking allows them to satisfy their requests. The technology is not super new; GPS is typically used for tracking, so its implementation rarely causes problems and provides many benefits,” says Bergh. “Tracking benefits both parties: the sender can monitor the parcel promptly and detect and address issues, while

Image: <https://nicecamsm.best/>



the recipient can see how their order is progressing and where it is at any given moment. The latter is even more critical: a satisfied customer equals loyalty to your company.”

the recipient can see how their order is progressing and where it is at any given moment. The latter is even more critical: a satisfied customer equals loyalty to your company.”

Companies already implementing online tracking have reduced logistics costs by approximately 20%.

The importance of the last mile is exemplified by Amazon, the world’s leading online retail platform. So much so that Amazon built its own last-mile solution to achieve faster delivery, lower costs and deliver a better customer experience.

For Amazon, the last mile remains the differen-



Amazon’s last mile centre in Rapho Township.





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Amazon workers move packages into delivery vans. Photos: Suzette Wenger, <https://lancasteronline.com/>

time frames for deliveries. Considering that the last mile, in all probability, holds the most expense for the supply chain, doing it smarter makes sense. Failed delivery, for example, can so much as double the cost of the last mile's logistics.

In South Africa where logistics is already expensive, it comes as no surprise that cost is a critical factor when it comes to those last few kilometres.

"Managing high costs remains one of the biggest challenges in last-mile logistics in South Africa, especially in meeting consumer demands for faster delivery," says Naidoo. "Urban congestion and efficient return management are also significant hurdles. Balancing cost, speed, and customer satisfaction remains a delicate and ongoing challenge for retailers."

According to Naidoo, the explosive growth of e-commerce in South Africa, mainly since the Covid-19 pandemic, has significantly influenced last-mile logistics, increasing delivery volumes and heightening customer expectations for rapid and reliable service. He says ...



“ Companies like Mr D Food and Uber Eats have revolutionised delivery services, compelling retailers to adopt innovative solutions to keep pace with increasingly demanding consumers and enhance operational efficiency. ”



Photo: Valentyn Ogirenko, Reuters, <https://qz.com/>



Craig Langton

Craig Langton, Founder and CEO of Hero Motorcycles South Africa and Last.Mile.Fast, says last mile logistics has become the differentiator in e-commerce fulfilment.

"It arguably plays the most important role in e-commerce fulfilment. With the e-commerce explosion in South Africa, we have seen retailers panic and adopt to quick outsourced motorcycle delivery services as a route to market. Most motorcycle service providers offer a last-mile delivery service that is outdated, expensive, with poor infrastructure, environmentally unsustainable with little or no focus on customer experience or rider safety."

He says the growth of the sector has certainly highlighted the need for more sustainable solutions, more efficient motorcycle brands, utilising technology and smart solutions. "The growth in the sector has also forced a change for more customer focus, while offering a more product inclusive solution," he adds.





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## Technology: Catalyst of change

In 2021, Gartner conducted research showing that by the beginning of 2025, approximately half of the companies involved in delivery-related activities were not only ready, but would invest in data collection and analytics solutions in the last mile space.

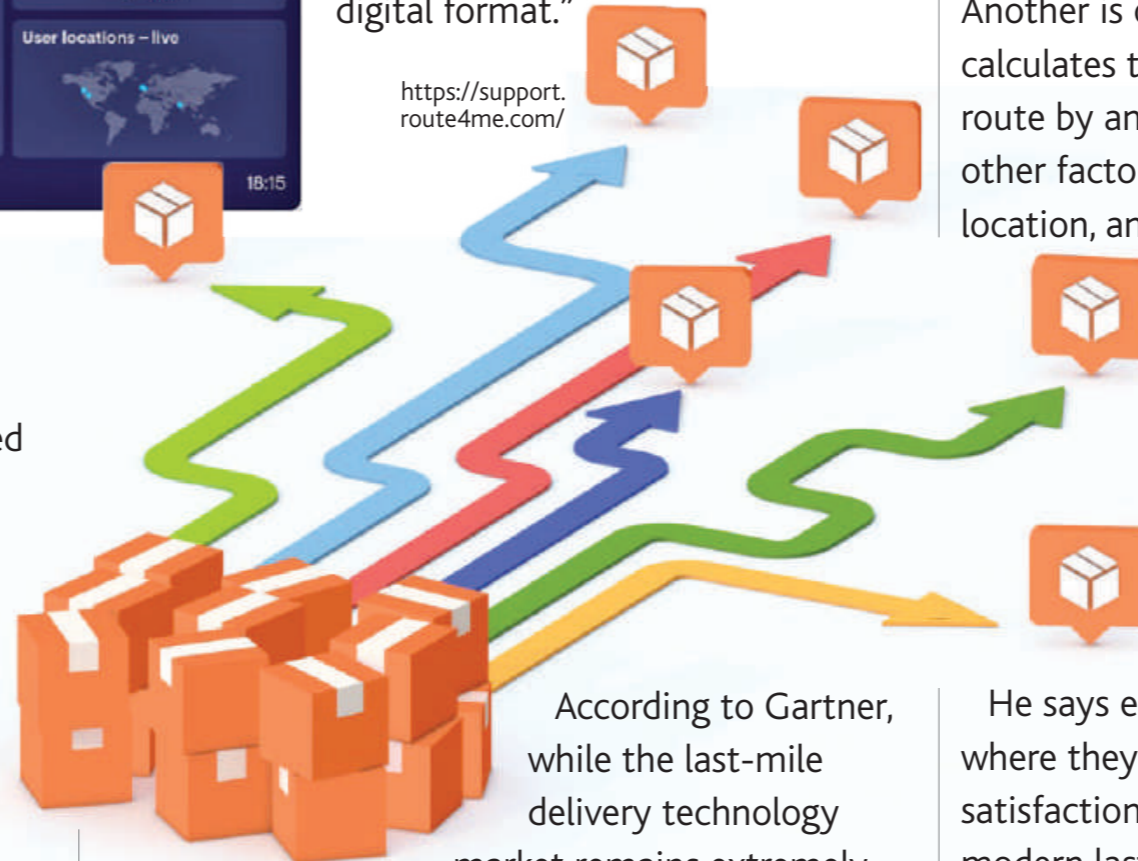
The company says nowadays, it is all about customer-centric transport management solutions that focus on managing the delivery process, which is how consumers and the products they order come together.

According to Bergh, the role of last-mile analytics is another fast-growing concept. He explains ...

“Last-mile analytics includes an analytical dashboard – an informative screen displaying all current and past data. It also entails heatmaps.”

These allow for evaluating new promising areas for creating delivery centres – for example,

identifying a location with many orders but poorly optimised logistics. It also includes digital reporting. This significantly saves time. You don't need to create schedules and analytics manually; many solutions generate this automatically in digital format.”



<https://support.route4me.com/>

According to Gartner, while the last-mile delivery technology market remains extremely fragmented, demand for these applications continues to grow, gathering interest from shippers and carriers alike as the need to optimise processes, reduce costs, and become more customer-centric increases. It says it is time to redefine the value in supply chains, and the last mile is critical in this.

Bergh says there is no doubt that more and more South African companies are coping and adapting to this changing environment.

The biggest challenge, however, remains implementing the required software applications that can provide the required outputs.

“Some of these applications that retailers find challenging to source and implement include logistics management. This allows for tracking trends, addressing issues, and improving service. Another is optimised delivery routes. This software calculates the fastest and most convenient delivery route by analysing road congestion and considering other factors like package dimensions, delivery location, and more,” he says.

“Integration with other services and businesses can also be challenging. Automation allows businesses to connect to complex delivery networks, create networks, and offer them for partner use. This expands their presence where it was minimal or absent.”

He says effective businesses seek to cut costs where they can, while retaining high customer satisfaction. “The technology associated with modern last-mile operations affects 20% to 30% of a business's delivery cost. Businesses that can reduce costs by the same amount stand to gain a competitive edge and win more customers and revenue.”

According to Bergh, last-mile delivery trends dictate business conditions, such as data collection on deliveries, real-time online tracking, environmental friendliness, process automation, and various delivery options.







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This enhances customer loyalty, improves the company's image, optimises logistics, and expands the customer base.

Langton says the traditional high cost of last-mile delivery can be reduced by over 30% by adopting more sustainable service providers using new technologies. "Investing in new solutions that reduce delivery failures and offering a wider range of products beyond what a traditional rider and box can deliver makes a significant impact. It's all about providing a bespoke, customer-focused delivery service."

He says the traditional high cost of motorcycles for last-mile delivery can now be avoided with a more sustainable B2B, B2C, and return mile service. As the 'drop fee' comes under pressure, service providers often reduce costs at the expense of customer experience and rider safety. However, the days when the quickest delivery was prioritised over cost are coming to an end.

"Current trends in motorcycle deliveries focus on providing a more efficient, customer-focused and lower cost service," he says. There is also a strong emphasis on reducing carbon emissions and enhancing packaging sustainability."

### Sustainability takes centre stage



Liesl de Wet

Nowadays, the environmental impact is always close to any supply chain discussion, says Liesl de Wet, a sustainability expert and chairperson of the Road Freight Association's Green Transport Interest Group. "With the Climate Change Bill now

approved, we can expect to see significant changes in the road freight sector," she recently said at a gathering of road freight transporters.

This is South Africa's first comprehensive piece of legislation to guide the country's transition to a greener and more resilient economy.

While it delivers the framework and roadmap to a low-carbon and climate-resilient South Africa that has signed the Paris Climate Agreement,

committing itself to cutting emissions between 350 and 420 million tonnes by 2030, it also brings about change.

De Wet says what this change will look like remains unknown. "What we do know is that it will introduce sectoral targets to reduce emissions. What these targets look like and how they will impact the road freight sector specifically is still unknown."

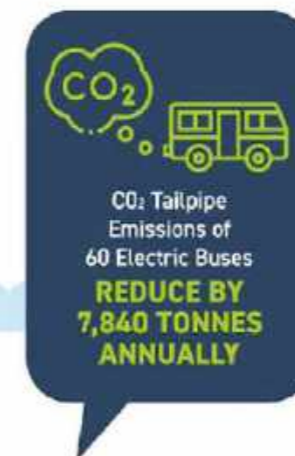
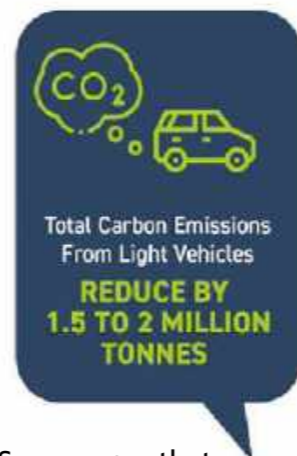
This is because the transport sector has yet to be divided by the Bill and is currently considered one. However, this approach could be more practical. Freight must be separated from passenger transport and categorised by sea, road and air mode.

"Sustainability in last-mile logistics is a pressing concern in South Africa, where the environmental impact of delivery vehicles and packaging waste are significant issues. Several companies are taking

proactive steps to address these challenges and set a benchmark for the industry," says Naidoo.

One of the leading sustainability issues is the high carbon emissions from traditional delivery vehicles. To combat this, various retailers have started integrating electric vehicles into

their delivery fleets. These include Takealot, Woolworths, and Faithful to Nature, amongst other e-commerce retailers. Adopting electric cars reduces carbon footprints and aligns with global environmental standards.



Some argue that EVs aren't any greener than cars that run on fuel. After all, electricity is produced by fossil fuels too.  
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Another critical issue is managing packaging waste, says Naidoo. “Woolworths is one of the prominent South African retailers known for its sustainability efforts and has been leading the way in reducing packaging waste. They have implemented recyclable and biodegradable packaging for their products. Woolworths also encourages customers to return used packaging through their in-store recycling programme, ensuring that packaging materials are reused or recycled, thereby reducing landfill waste.”

According to Naidoo, optimising delivery routes to reduce unnecessary mileage is another effective solution to improve last-mile logistics – not just from a carbon footprint perspective but also when it comes to cost and efficiency. “All South Africa’s large retailers have invested in advanced route optimisation software to streamline their delivery processes. This technology helps to minimise travel distances and fuel consumption, thereby reducing emissions. The use of route optimisation not only benefits the environment but also improves delivery efficiency and reduces operational costs.”

A new study finds that depending on the location, in some cases an equivalent or even bigger reduction in emissions could be achieved by switching to lightweight conventional (gas-powered) vehicles instead of electric power vehicles. <https://news.mit.edu/>



Calculating a vehicle’s efficiency doesn’t begin and end with the fuel it carries, but should take into account all the factors that go into building and running it. Blue Planet Studio, Getty Images. [www.autoweek.com/](http://www.autoweek.com/)

Langton says motorcycles offer a viable option for last-mile logistics, making them more sustainable and capable of reaching every sector of the market at a lower cost per drop and with reduced carbon emissions.

“Around 40% of logistics costs are incurred in the last mile. New motorcycle brands with smart IOT and smart delivery boxes can securely deliver anything from chronic medications to mobile phones. By lowering the cost of last-mile delivery and increasing market share, this approach is certainly the way forward. Retailers can benefit from smarter, more efficient route optimisation, including return mile services.”

## Fostering transformation and driving change

Naidoo highlights that it is not just about environmental sustainability but the overall bigger picture of delivering on customer expectations and needs. He adds, “Customer experience is paramount in last-mile logistics. Ensuring timely and reliable deliveries, providing real-time updates, and offering flexible delivery options and easy returns (reverse logistics) are essential. Retailers can continually improve customer experience by actively seeking and acting on customer feedback to refine their delivery services.”

Furthermore, he says, dedicated fulfilment centres are gaining traction. These are warehouses or stores located closer to urban areas and customers. Checkers Sixty60, the on-demand grocery delivery service by Checkers, uses dedicated fulfilment centres to ensure faster and more efficient deliveries. By identifying specific stores in ideal locations closer to customers, they can reduce the distance travelled by delivery vehicles, leading to lower emissions and quicker delivery times.







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Adds Langton, "To reduce last mile costs, an all-new approach is required. Customer experience is now considered as the new focus and disruptor in last mile deliveries."

Speaking about the use of motorcycles in particular, he says the days of procuring the cheapest or outdated models are over. "Now, the focus is on motorcycles built to the highest quality, designed to offer the lowest total cost of ownership while increasing rider safety and ergonomics, and still ensuring environmental sustainability. New motorcycle brands utilising technology have proven to increase efficiency and reduce the total cost of ownership by 50%. These bikes are designed with improved rider ergonomics, enhanced safety features, and solutions to prevent rider fatigue, theft, and hijacking."

Bergh says some retailers are opting for hybrid delivery models to deliver the much-needed efficiency required. "This is where companies try to combine outsourced and in-house delivery capacity to meet transportation and human resource demands as effectively as possible. It's far more convenient to use a partner's ready-to-go infrastructure when quickly growing and scaling a business in new cities," he says.

"Building such an infrastructure from scratch takes too much time and can lead to avoidable mistakes. However, when you need to launch a new product, having an in-house delivery service handle those logistics is better."

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This can give you the most control over the quality of the customer experience; everyone delivering the product follows the same unified company standards and is invested in seeing work go well.”

He says last-mile delivery trends dictate business conditions, such as data collection on deliveries, real-time online tracking, environmental friendliness, process automation, and various delivery options. This enhances customer loyalty, improves the company’s image, optimises logistics, and expands the customer base.

More technology can be expected in last-mile logistics. RFID technology, which allows for the rapid scanning of multiple items or packages, is already being leveraged to improve inventory management and order fulfilment.

It also improves accuracy in delivery tracking and reduces errors while enhancing the much-needed visibility and transparency demanded throughout the supply chain today. More so, each piece of tech will have to be deeply integrated with all others. Technology service provider Made4Net states the connection between a company’s Warehouse Management System (WMS) and last-mile delivery might only be obvious when there are integration data flows and real-time viewing throughout the supply chain.

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When these systems are connected, it allows companies to track inventory from the dock door to the customer's door, giving a better view.

Langton predicts that with e-commerce continuing its upward trajectory, the focus will remain on reducing carbon emissions. "Currently, independent fleet owners, responsible for up to 70% of last-mile deliveries, often purchase the cheapest motorcycles available, neglecting rider safety, environmental sustainability, and issues like carbon emissions, noise, and consumable pollution. Retailers' realisation and accountability in purchasing sustainable solutions will have the most significant impact in South Africa, driving the change toward a safer, cleaner, and more sustainable future."

Naidoo says last-mile logistics will remain prominent in the future. "The shift towards online shopping and the resulting changes in consumer behaviour are significant drivers of innovations in last-mile logistics. Additionally, collaboration between retailers, logistics providers, and technology companies is crucial for developing and implementing effective last-mile delivery solutions." **SR**



**Catherine Larkin** is a communication and marketing professional, specialising in Logistics, Transport and Supply Chain. Her company, CVLC Communication, is a corporate public relations, communication, marketing and events consultancy. Its services range from full secretariat support, project management and administration.



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Goler's solutions are not just about financing; they come with unparalleled access to engineering expertise, ensuring that your logistics infrastructure is designed and implemented to the highest standards.

Our collaborative approach ensures that Relog works closely with your team to develop optimised logistics

operations that are fit for purpose. This partnership guarantees that the solutions we implement are tailored to your specific business requirements, facilitating seamless integration and immediate impact. The result is a logistics system that supports your growth objectives and enhances overall resource utilisation.

Imagine a logistics network that not only meets current demands but is also scalable to accommodate future growth. With Relog and Goler, this vision can become a reality. Our combined expertise in logistics and financial solutions provides a comprehensive package that addresses both operational efficiency and financial sustainability.

Moreover, our commitment to your success extends beyond the initial implementation. We offer ongoing support and optimisation to ensure that your logistics systems continue to perform at their best. This continuous improvement approach ensures that your business remains agile and responsive to market changes, positioning you for sustained growth and competitiveness.

In conclusion, as South Africa gears up for a period of significant economic expansion, now is the time to ensure your business is ready to ride the wave. Don't let outdated logistics processes or financial constraints hold you back. Partner with Relog and Goler to unlock the full potential of your business.

Contact us today for a free, no-obligation discussion to better understand how we can help you grow through enhanced productivity and resource utilisation. Together, we can build a logistics network that not only meets your current needs but also supports your future ambitions.



**Relog and Goler – your partners in growth and efficiency.**





# The complete guide to Warehouse Management Systems for supermarket retailers

The lingering impacts of inflation, continued e-commerce growth and the return of the store shopping experience are having a significant impact on today's supermarkets. Retailers must continue to innovate to delight their customers, and many are turning to technology and automation to remain competitive.

Amit Levy, EVP of strategy and sales for Made4net, a global WMS software provider, said ...



Amit Levy

“A significant number of grocers worldwide have adopted Warehouse Management Systems (WMS) to streamline their operations. A WMS helps supermarket retailers manage their inventory more effectively, streamline operations, reduce costs, enhance customer satisfaction, and adapt to changing demands and regulations.”

## Understanding warehouse management systems

The simplest definition of a WMS is a software solution designed to optimise and streamline warehouse operations, including inventory management, order fulfilment, and labour efficiency. According to supply chain and enterprise solution providers, enVista, WMS software has come to encompass



Image by NanoStockk, www.canva.com

how you receive inventory, how you store it, how you pick items for shipment and how you know when to order more.

Because there's so much interconnectivity built in, software naturally makes these processes cleaner, easier to track, and less susceptible to human error. WMS software solutions offer visibility into a business's entire inventory and manage supply chain fulfilment operations from the distribution centre to the store shelf or customer door. However, not all warehouse

**A WMS is a software solution designed to optimise and streamline warehouse operations, including inventory management, order fulfilment, and labour efficiency.**

management systems are created equal. Although a WMS can be comparatively analogue, it does not mean it has to be; just

because some warehouse management systems come with every feature available, it does not mean you must adopt them all. When searching for the right WMS system for your business, it's a matter of finding what's right for you with a system that is flexible enough to adapt as external factors and conditions shift or the business grows.

Please note that WMS is not to be confused with Warehouse Control Systems or Warehouse Execution Systems, WCS and/or WES, but how they overlap should be understood.



## The main advantages of a WMS

Over the past four years, the grocery sector has faced numerous challenges, including pandemic-related fears, safety concerns, inflation, and constant supply chain disruptions. These difficulties have highlighted the critical need for technology that enables supermarket retailers to stay competitive, meet consumer expectations, and be prepared for future challenges.

A WMS delivers many benefits including ...

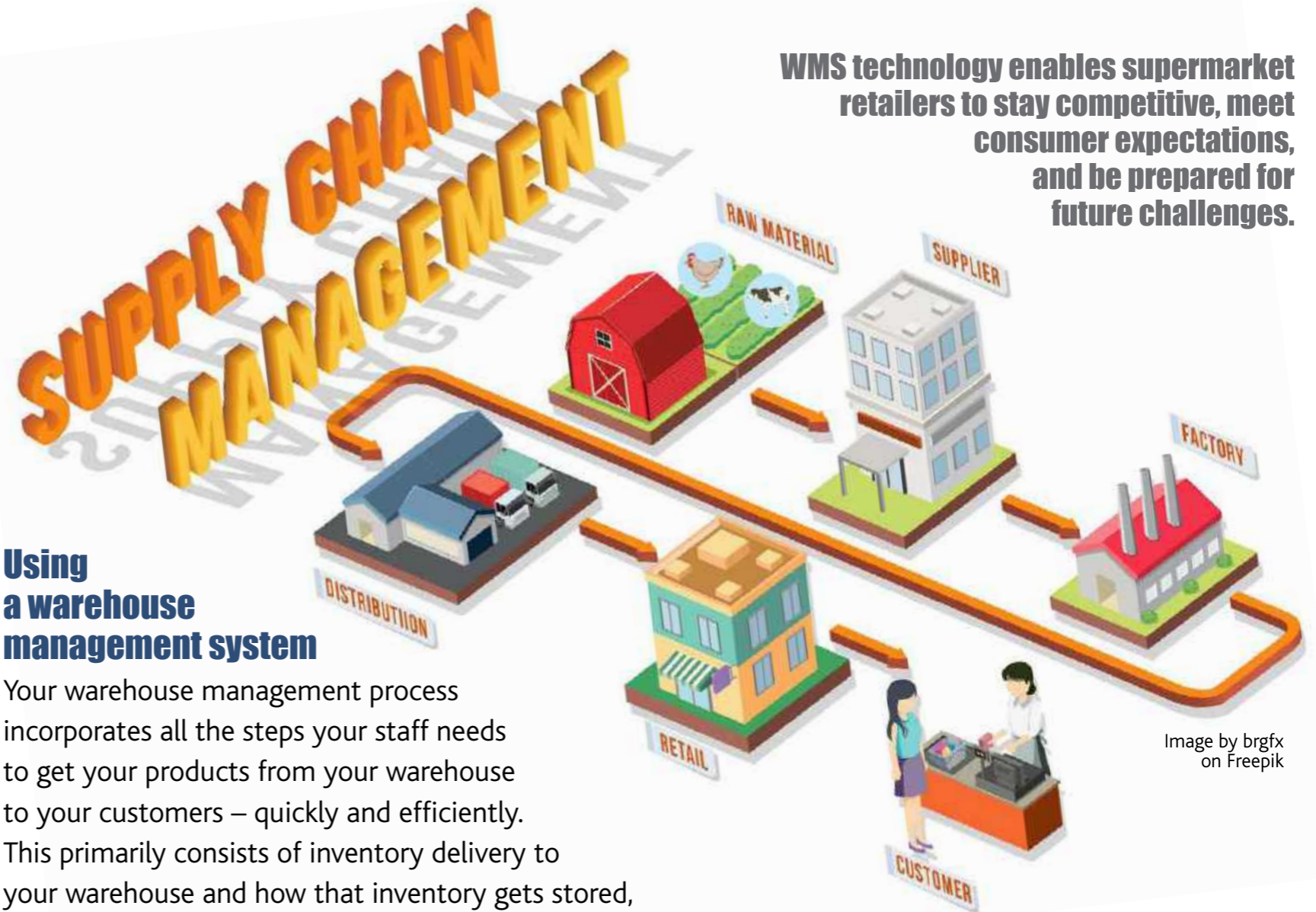
**Increased efficiency and accuracy:** A WMS optimises warehouse processes, reducing errors and improving inventory management, which is essential for meeting consumer demands promptly.

**Cost savings:** By streamlining operations and reducing labour costs, a WMS helps retailers manage expenses more effectively, ensuring they can adapt without incurring unsustainable costs.

**Enhanced flexibility:** With advanced technology, retailers can create new, effective processes and quickly pivot to meet changing consumer demands and market conditions.

**Real-time data management:** A WMS provides comprehensive data collection and management, enabling better decision-making and strategic planning to maintain consistent profit margins.

**Scalability:** As retailers expand their offerings, a WMS supports scalability, allowing them to manage increased inventory and delivery options efficiently.



**WMS technology enables supermarket retailers to stay competitive, meet consumer expectations, and be prepared for future challenges.**

## Using a warehouse management system

Your warehouse management process incorporates all the steps your staff needs to get your products from your warehouse to your customers – quickly and efficiently. This primarily consists of inventory delivery to your warehouse and how that inventory gets stored, in addition to order picking, packing and ultimately shipping to customers.

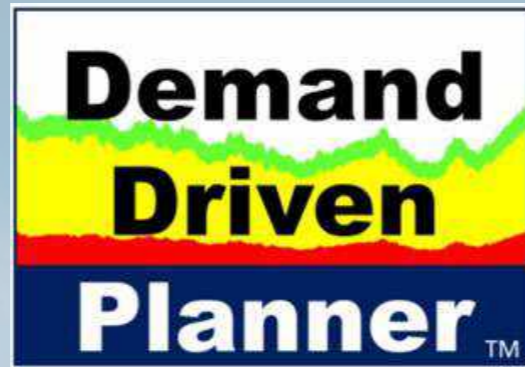
Our consulting partner, enVista, explains that a WMS manages ...

- **Inventory reception/tracking** – The first step in your WMS’s responsibilities begins when the inventory arrives. You need to track what arrives, when it arrives and store it in a way that allows you to retrieve it quickly.
- **Shipping** – This includes the delivery options and shipping services offered to customers. Your WMS includes the completed order details and provides order tracking details for the customer.

- **Picking and packing** – When an order comes through, it must be quickly and accurately picked from its storage location to match a client’s order. A WMS should generate pick lists for each picker to retrieve items in the most efficient way. From there, a packer will place items securely in a shipping container.
- **Reporting** – Your software not only tracks where the inventory is in the system, but it can provide records that summarise the health of the overall system. These reports indicate how quickly orders are fulfilled and how accurate your fulfilment is, leading to data-driven decisions.

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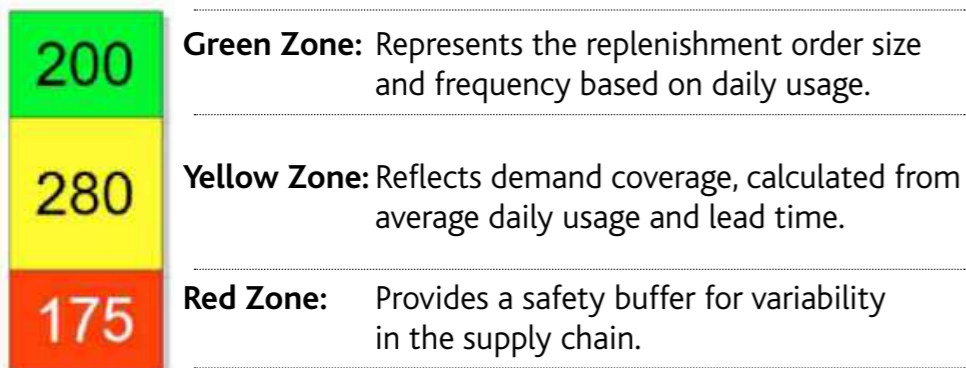


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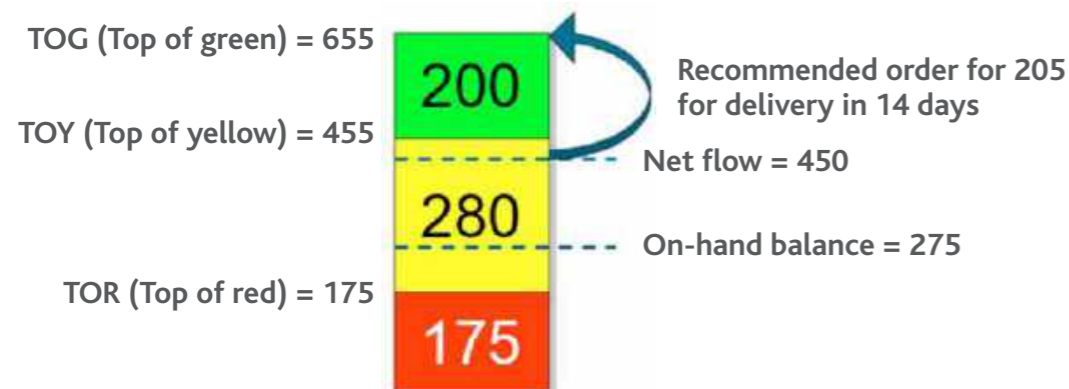
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This puts you in the Yellow Zone, prompting a reorder to ensure NetFlow stays in the Green Zone.

The stock, or on-hand inventory, should ideally hover around the lower half of the Yellow Zone.

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Image: D. Vinothakan, www.linkedin.com/



## Key differences between types of WMS software

There are four primary types of warehouse management systems ...

- **Standalone systems** – These are dedicated on-premise warehouse management systems that are not integrated with other supply chain functions. They are Ideal for small to medium-sized businesses that need basic warehouse functionalities without extensive supply chain integration.
- **Supply chain modules** – This is a WMS module that focuses on warehouse operations as part of a larger supply chain management software system that manages all activities required to create and deliver a product.

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- **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) modules** – ERP software is a powerful tool where the WMS is integrated into a broader software system encompassing almost all aspects of your business. An ERP System includes the warehouse management system features discussed and rolls them into a package combining things like supply chain planning, accounting, customer relationship management, human resources and more.
- **Cloud-based systems** – These systems are hosted on the cloud and accessed via the internet. A cloud-based warehouse management system can supply the same benefits of a more traditional WMS, while also providing faster implementation and lower total cost of ownership.

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Image by macrovector on Freepik

### What is the best WMS for my business?

This depends on your specific business and the options potential vendors provide. Choosing the best WMS vendor for you means choosing a warehouse management system that solves the specific requirements you need to be fulfilled. According to Amit Levy, EVP of sales and strategy at Made4net, "Most of the reputable WMS vendors are going to be able to handle all of the basic functionality you need, and most likely they will enable you to improve how you're performing today. But many of these vendors will provide more functionality than you need and you may only use a portion of the available functionality."

Having a good understanding of your warehouse complexity is key as more complex facilities require more WMS functional breadth and depth to support your needs, while less complex operations often require less functional robustness. You don't want to overbuy or underbuy."

You'll also want to look for a vendor with a background in the supermarket industry. This will yield a better fit WMS to match your food distribution needs.

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## Must-haves for a supermarket retail WMS

**Real-time inventory management:** Ensure accurate tracking of inventory both in-store and in the warehouse.

**Seamless online integration:** Sync inventory levels with online ordering platforms to prevent stockouts and avoid order substitutions or refunds.

**Omnichannel order handling:** Efficiently manage orders from various platforms, offering multiple fulfilment options for customers.

**Scalability and flexibility:** Easily incorporate new fulfilment facilities like in-store fulfilment centres and micro-fulfilment centres.

**Comprehensive data visibility:** Provide data at every touchpoint to enhance visibility and improve forecasting capabilities.

**Automation and robotics Integration:** Support the integration of automation and robotic technology to streamline processes and improve employee training and retention.

**Rapid fulfilment capabilities:** Meet consumer expectations for next day or same-day fulfilment, often within mere hours.

**Expirable goods management:** Track and manage the shelf life of products, ensuring compliance with stock rotation requirements and minimising waste.

**Real-time traceability:** Maintain the ability to quickly trace and manage inventory in case of recalls, ensuring consumer safety.

## Warehouse management system implementation tips

Once you've selected the best system, you must turn your attention to execution. enVista explains that warehouse management system implementation requires planning and proper expectations. You need to know the timeline and must consider the internal shareholders responsible for seeing it through.

There are other serious dos and don'ts of WMS implementation you must keep in mind in order to efficiently manage the scope of the project such as budgeting for testing and training. Again, one size does not fit all when it comes to WMS implementation.

Image: <https://envistacorp.com/>



Steps in planning for a WMS implementation ...

- Set expectations for the project
- Consider who will 'own' the WMS
- Plan your WMS implementation timeline
- Get your IT team involved in your WMS project early on
- Determine your requirements before starting the vendor selection process
- Avoid modifications to control project costs
- Incorporate testing, training, and go-live elements into your project budget
- Manage project scope instead of forcing shortcuts



Image: <https://marsner.com/>

## Conclusion

The lingering effects of inflation, ongoing e-commerce growth and the resurgence of in-store shopping are significantly impacting today's supermarkets. To stay competitive and meet customer expectations, retailers are increasingly turning to technology and automation.

Many grocers worldwide have adopted warehouse management systems (WMS) to streamline their operations. A WMS helps supermarket retailers by managing inventory more effectively, reducing operational costs, enhancing customer satisfaction and adapting to changing demands and regulations. This adoption enables supermarkets to innovate continuously, offering a seamless shopping experience both online and in-store. **SR**



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# Addressing operational efficiency and port congestion in SA Ports

## A factual analysis of the World Bank CPPI report

The recently released World Bank (WB) Container Port Performance Index (CPPI) report is damning – harming the reputation of our container terminals. At the outset, it is important to mention that the WB reports on a 2023 period, which does not take into account corrective action taken since then, nor does it measure progress achieved since Transnet has been under new management as part of the recovery and transformation strategy.

To contextualise, this was a period at the height of the crisis; the timing of its release unjustifiably tarnishes today's developments, casting doubt on the efficacy of robust corrective action underway and the hard work of the recovery teams and the leadership of the National Logistics Crisis Committee (NLCC) – a strong strategic Public | Private consultative initiative by the Government that serves as the anchor.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that there are valid points in the report, and we must not simply dismiss it but rather constructively use it as another building block and join hands to ensure that we improve our container port performance, the title and stated objective of the report.

The report's findings are based on an index or ranking of container port performance – not a score – and do not serve as a diagnostic tool to show where a port should improve. Improvement

The Durban Container Port:  
[www.engineeringnews.co.za/](http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/)



and corrective programmes are the lens industry, and Transnet – particularly Transnet Port Terminals – must continue to apply as a collective focus for our ports, and this is already well underway.

Moreover, the WB report uses rank aggregation, combining multiple rankings into a single ranking. This is a significant problem arising in many areas, and it is an overly simplified approach to providing a single ranking of a complex system that is a port call. Furthermore, as the WB concedes, values are imputed when combinations of port calls and

vessel call sizes are missing. The authors caution that the inherent risk with this approach is that poor or good performance within just one group will cascade across all call-size groups.

Therefore, the CPPI is undoubtedly a unidimensional view of port performance. It attempts to examine the system's performance and devise a single index to indicate whether it is good or bad.

Despite this methodology critique, SAAFF believes the report emphasised that South Africa lost time wasted at outer anchorages, which



# Mobile racking in SA Fruit Stores



Southern Storage Solutions – DEXION, has installed numerous mobile rack installations in conjunction with Barpro Storage which has increased the storage capacity of each facility without the expensive task of increasing the room size to cater for conventional pallet racking or drive in racking with all the associated extra refrigeration and electrical costs.

Traditionally pallets of packed fruit were stored by securing steel corner posts to each pallet and then storing another level of pallets on top. While doubling store capacity, this form of block storage effectively prevented stock rotation, increased stock damage and in some situations prevented adequate cooling. As fruit packaging became further differentiated, accessing stock quickly for an order became practically impossible.

Pallet racking was introduced into existing fruit stores to solve these problems. "Drive-In" racking made better theoretical use of the chilled space and reduced product damage. However the accessibility problem was not solved leading to "drive-in" lanes being only partially utilised for immediate access to individual product lines. The alternative was to use fixed selective racking, giving immediate access to every pallet but greatly reducing storage capacity.

Mobile racking was first used in 1997 in a fruit store outside Grabouw in the Western Cape.

## WHAT IS MOBILE RACKING?

Mobile racking consists of special rails that are laid in the floor during construction. Rails can also be retrofitted in existing rooms provided the floor is suitable by levelling the rails on the existing surface and pouring a 150mm reinforced slab. A low ramp is needed at the entrance. The mobile bases run on the rails and support pallet racking which is specially designed for use in a mobile application. The bases are motorised and energy efficient.

Maximum tonnage per base varies but should not exceed 360 tons. In larger stores mobiles are arranged in banks of up to 10 bases, each with its own moving aisle. The bases are controlled either by push buttons, remote control, or by an interface with the warehouse management system. An access aisle is created at the push of a button.

Safety measures include photoelectric beams down the length of each base and across the front of each mobile bank with additional emergency stops. To move one or multiple bases takes approximately one minute twenty seconds. Mobiles are designed to give lighting signals so that the lights come on only in open aisles. This results in energy savings as each light produces heat which must be removed by the refrigeration system.

The possibility of pallets breaking was removed by using a pallet support or saddle

beams in the middle of each pallet slot. These were painted yellow to assist with pallet placement especially on higher levels and increase rack strength. Another challenge arose when packed fruit stores remained in use for extended periods.

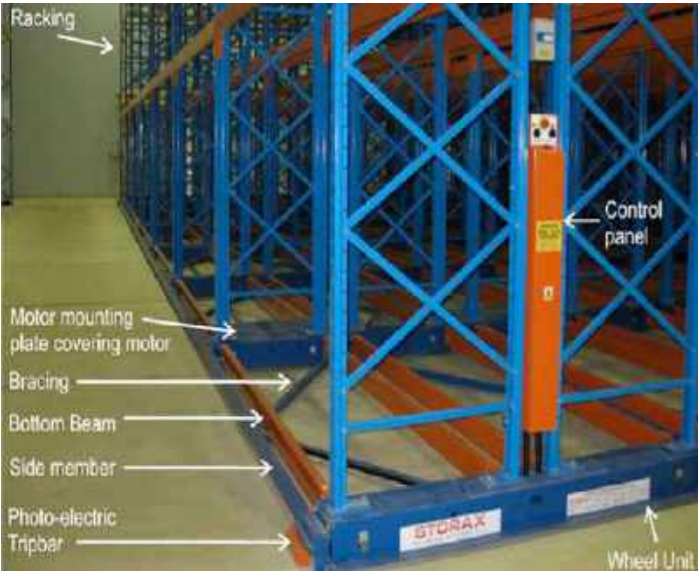
Improved ventilation in the mobiles allowed packed fruit to be chilled and store temperatures were reduced to around 0 degrees C. Frost heave, caused by moisture freezing under the floor, is not good for mobiles and recent installations have under floor insulation and heater mats to make sure this doesn't happen.

The advantages of using mobiles in fruit stores have become apparent over the years. More expensive than "fixed selective" or "drive in", mobiles can increase the practical capacity of a store by up to 75 or 80% while still giving immediate access to every pallet.

For all your storage solution requirements, contact Ron Bonthuys at Dexion.

**Contact Details:**

Southern Storage Solutions (Pty) Ltd t/a  
**Dexion Storage Solutions**  
 Contact: Ron Bonthuys  
 E-mail: [ron@dexioncape.co.za](mailto:ron@dexioncape.co.za)  
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The company also offers a full racking inspection service which can be completed every six months, or where necessary on a more frequent basis. This includes a full audit on the storage system, a detailed report and recommendations on damage prevention. Certification can be provided on request.

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we (and Transnet) accept. Nevertheless, using a vessel's stay duration as the sole measure of container port performance without considering other factors like throughput and handling rates highlights key obstacles to using the findings to measure container port performance accurately on a comparative basis.

Furthermore, the WB concedes that "it is impossible to see from the data whether waiting time is voluntary or forced; it is difficult to find a suitable level at which to discount waiting time in this scenario."

The report also states that S&P Global uses tracking and observation tools to determine where vessels anchor and create zones accordingly.

We must, therefore, conclude that South African ports were excessively penalised for time lost at anchorage.

However, if we isolate port performance based on time and efficiency (as the WB sets out), we find that in Durban Pier 1, our GCH is around 15.8 moves per hour. At Durban Pier 2, our GCH was around 16.4 moves per hour. This is 33% and 30% below the global average, respectively, but by no means 'the worst' in the world.

Some examples show that the terminals reached 32 GCH in isolated cases, nearing global best practices. So, one might argue that a container terminal capable of sometimes achieving global best practices can certainly not be considered the worst in the world. But at the same time, South African port users come from a background where rates of around 25 were relatively common

<https://cosmoindia.biz/>



in the not-too-distant past, and this is what makes the current performance so worrying.

Furthermore, there is no mention of the volume or frequency of schedules. To look at some examples, regional ports included in the study, such as the Port of Maputo, only had 87 vessel calls and only serviced vessel sizes up to 5 000 TEUs.

Another example is the Port of Nacala or Port Sudan, which only had 27 and 26 vessel calls, respectively and also serviced vessel sizes up to 5 000 TEUs. According to the WB's dataset, Cape Town and Durban had 196 and 499 vessel calls, respectively, and both handled larger Neo-Panamax vessels (8 501–13 500 TEU). So, to compare these examples to our ports when considering the volume or frequency of schedules is entirely invalid.

According to our analysis, vessel dwell time for Durban during the period was 83.2 hours at Pier 2

and 67.4 hours at Pier 1, respectively. This was against the global average of 40.5 hours. This shows that time spent at South African ports is too much, but arguably not the worst in the world.

What is critical now – a reality that the report emphasises in somewhat crude terms – is that our port system needs to bring in specialisation and investment through Private Sector Participation, allowing for competition between the ports and terminals within the ports (intra-port competition).

In our current landscape, whatever transpires politically is true for our logistics network. It is incumbent upon us to create a new dawn where the focus is on utilising trade, transport, and logistics as a critical driver for economic growth and development – especially for an open economy such as South Africa – at the dawn of a new multi-dimensional democracy. **SR**





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# Commercial kitchen equipment Back-of-house essentials

The equipment used in commercial back-of-house kitchens, pantry and storage areas is undergoing an evolution, with appliances being linked to the Internet and kitchen automation software reducing accidents, lowering losses, and increasing revenue.



[www.unileverfoodsolutions.com.ph/](http://www.unileverfoodsolutions.com.ph/)

Known simply as Auguste Escoffier, Georges Auguste Escoffier forged an indelible mark on the culinary world that continues to reverberate through time. Born on 28 October 1846, he gained fame as a talented chef, someone who owned restaurants, and as a writer about food, bringing about major changes to both French cuisine and the way we approach cooking today. His innovative techniques, pioneering spirit, and unwavering dedication to the art of cooking still inspire and influence chefs and food enthusiasts across the globe.

Escoffier revolutionised French cuisine through simplification and modernisation, authored *Le Guide Culinaire*, a definitive French cookbook and collaborated with César Ritz in the luxury hotel industry. He promoted professionalism and respectability in the culinary field, elevated the social standing of chefs and inspired the development of nouvelle cuisine, the use of fresh, seasonal ingredients and on proper hygiene and sanitation in kitchens.



Georges Auguste Escoffier  
[www.wekivaculinary.org](http://www.wekivaculinary.org)



Escoffier's 'brigade de cuisine' revolutionised the organisation of professional kitchens, introducing a hierarchical structure that streamlined workflow and clearly delineated roles and responsibilities for kitchen staff. The brigade system allowed for greater efficiency and collaboration, enabling kitchens to produce sophisticated dishes with remarkable consistency.

<https://www.cuisinenet.com/chefs/georges-auguste-escoffier/>

It's important to consider all your equipment needs when designing and planning a retail or wholesale back of house. This is particularly true for speciality areas such as deli, butchery, bakery, fishmonger, and cheese counter which contribute significantly to feet through the door, loyalty and creating a destination shop. In addition, the equipment used in commercial back-of-house kitchens, pantry and storage areas is undergoing an evolution, with appliances being linked to the

Internet and kitchen automation software reducing accidents, lowering losses, and increasing revenue.

As time pressure, space limitations, and energy cost and supply pressures increase, so do the demands on a commercial kitchen. Futureproofing your back of house – including hot and cold kitchen, pantries and storage areas – is an important step in ensuring the sustainability of your business. This means that flexible, multifunctional, and efficient design is essential.



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## Foodservice equipment

### Adaptability and versatility are key for commercial kitchen design

Matthew Hodgson, National Food Services Manager at Macadams, which supplies bakery and foodservice equipment for retailers and wholesalers across the spectrum says ...

“ When designing a back-of-house area, I would prioritise the adaptability and versatility of the equipment. If you’re buying quality equipment, it should generally last for at least 10 years or even longer if serviced regularly. Your offering will and should evolve over that time, so you need equipment that can grow and evolve with you, without needing replacement because it has become outdated or cannot produce what the market demands. ”

## Multifunctionality

### Equipment to boost profits and production

With space at a premium and increased demands on back-of-house equipment because of new and varied consumer demands and expectations, multifunctional equipment is a must. As customers demand more transparency, opening up some back-of-house areas to public view becomes necessary. Replacing old, outdated, and unattractive equipment in this instance may be an aesthetic decision, but it can also positively impact profitability and production levels. Sleek, attractive, colourful equipment featuring touchscreen technology is becoming more accessible as manufacturers recognise this shift in the market.

www.wekivaculinary.org



## Versatile combos

Versatile kitchen equipment can help reduce your back-of-house footprint. A good example of this are combi ovens that offer both convection and steamer capabilities, or fryer and grill combinations. These can also streamline food prep and cooking processes, saving on time and labour costs.

According to BOHEC Middle East Co. distributors of commercial kitchen, catering, bakery and laundry equipment in UAE, smart combination ovens are a change that will be noticeable in commercial kitchens in the coming years.

“These ovens will use cutting-edge technology such as convection, radiation, steam, and others to cook food faster and at a higher quality. It will check the temperature automatically to ensure that the moisture levels of the food are maintained and that the food does not burn. This is a fantastic

space-saving idea that will provide multiple functions in a single oven”.

In addition, convenient solutions that save time and labour are also seeing growth, and high-speed ovens are a popular solution here. “What you’re looking for is something that can make a toasted sandwich in 90 seconds using microwave, impingement\*, and direct heat technology,” explains Hodgson.

“Versatile appliances that can cook, toast, grill, and reheat offer speed of service and high-quality output with a small footprint. This takes the pressure off traditional ovens and there’s no need for extraction solutions. They’re also energy efficient, which is another plus. Smaller units that offer hybrid or multifunctionality make planning for reduced spaces easier.”

\*Impingement heat technology uses high-speed air that is directed at the surface of a product to accelerate surface browning.



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Food Lover's Market recently conducted their own independent comparison of the electricity usage of the touchscreen model vs the manual control model, seeing 42.78% in overall energy savings.

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## Sustainability and energy efficiency

Sustainability speaks to your business practices as much as it does to your environmental impact. Investing in energy-efficient equipment that reduces waste may be a costly undertaking initially, but it's more than likely to pay off in the long-term.

Equipment such as blast chillers and blast freezers extend the life of cooked or fresh food, significantly reducing the cooling and freezing time. This process enables the food to move through temperatures where bacteria may form, which can result in foodborne illnesses. These quick cooling and quick-freezing processes improve food safety and help to preserve quality, nutrition and flavour.

In-house or on-site composting and recycling can have a significant impact on a retailer or wholesaler's carbon footprint. Reducing food waste is an essential component of increasing sustainability. As the equipment associated with this becomes more compact, simpler to use and manage, and less offensive in terms of odour and mess, including on-site composting and recycling in your back-of-house processes becomes easier.

In terms of energy savings, most commercial kitchen equipment is now designed to achieve maximum energy efficiency and savings, while also being able to use environmentally friendly or alternative fuels and refrigerants.

Improved heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and air purification systems have become standard for many international brands and chains. With often harsh back-of-house con-

<https://www.belshaw.com/>



ditions contributing to high staff turnover, improving working conditions and supporting the health of your employees makes good business sense. Incorporating heat recovery systems and hygiene systems utilising environmentally friendly solutions such as ultraviolet light and earth-friendly cleaning products is another good step towards sustainability.

## Automation and technology

As the Internet of Things (IoT), machine learning, artificial intelligence (AI) and automation technologies continue to evolve and improve, so too does

their impact on every space in the retail and wholesale industry.

Your kitchen equipment is no exception. In some restaurants, particularly those in Japan and some European countries, voice-activated controls, robotics, and fully integrated reservation, ordering, and food preparation systems are becoming more commonplace. It's not an entirely new concept for the local South African market, either, as Hodgson says.

"The Donut Robot is quite popular. It can make 500 donuts an hour – and we usually put this front of house in Spar stores, Food Lover's Markets, and Pick n Pay stores."

He adds, "Recent developments include using IoT for monitoring and controlling equipment automatically or remotely, AI and machine learning for managing processes, and automation and integrated solutions to improve existing systems, processes, and equipment."

Going forward, kitchen management will increasingly rely on digital and cloud-based technologies, which have the ability to streamline your kitchen operations with greater visibility into inventory management, stock control and ordering, recipe ROI, costs and wastage.





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## Hygiene and food safety

Hytek Food Equipment, which provides a broad range of commercial kitchen equipment for hotels, restaurants, hospitals, food courts, educational institutions, corporate kitchens and industrial canteens across major cities in India, says maintaining high standards of hygiene and food safety have always been important in food service.

“Recent events increasing this emphasis, top commercial kitchen equipment manufacturers are incorporating advanced sanitation features into their products.” Hytek promotes food safety and cleanliness with easy to clean surfaces, antimicrobial materials and hygienic design concepts in their commercial kitchen equipment products.

## TOP TRENDS TO WATCH

### Convenience

Customers want quick, convenient, and tasty options from your deli and ready-to-eat sections. To meet this trend, it could be worth investing in equipment that can facilitate your ability to offer toasted sandwiches, bagels, wraps, nachos, pizza, dessert items, confectionary products, and reheated meals.

From a back-of-house point of view, choose equipment that can perform one or more functions, that saves space, and that can help reduce food waste and energy use. Automated equipment, and equipment that can reduce labour costs – such as self-cleaning ovens and dishwashers – are a win here.

Hot and cold restaurant equipment repair. <https://thepkigroup.com/>



### Centralisation

Centralising production allows for better quality control and enables retailers and wholesalers to invest in high-quality equipment at one location. Economies of scale means much higher production quality at a lower per unit cost.

### Size

Smaller units make planning with less space easier, as does hybrid or multi-function equipment such as combi-ovens and multifunctional fryers.

### Innovation

Rather than solely focusing on improvements to existing equipment options, manufacturers are also coming up with new equipment. These include hybrid and multifunctional equipment such as multi-faucet water dispensers for still and sparkling water served at predetermined temperatures,

water dispensers that automatically add flavouring, power wash sinks, self-cleaning stove hoods, and sustainable packaging that is both attractive and fit for purpose. Refrigeration will also see changes, says BOHEC in their blog ‘What will the future of commercial kitchen equipment look like?’ “More frozen and flash frozen foods will be available in the coming years, while refrigerators will feature reminders for food freshness and storage instructions.”

### Customisation

Internationally, stores want a personalised equipment offering – from tailored functions and specialised equipment to specific colours for a customised aesthetic. Offering flexible options that can be personalised is becoming standard as it gives retailers and wholesalers a world of choice.



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## Four main considerations when choosing commercial kitchen equipment

- **Efficiency:** For faster preparation and production.
- **Consistency:** To ensure quality of food and customer satisfaction.
- **Durability:** Equipment must hold up to your busy kitchen schedule without requiring constant repairs and replacements.
- **Safety:** Certified kitchen equipment will reduce the risk of accidents and keep your workplace safe and in line with legislation.

<https://www.easyequipment.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-choosing-commercial-kitchen-equipment.html>

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<https://medium.com/@bohecmeuae/>  
[www.nationalkitchenequipment.com.au/](http://www.nationalkitchenequipment.com.au/)

## WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING YOUR BACK OF HOUSE

**Consider your staff complement.** Who will be working in this back-of-house area and what is their skill level? South Africa is blessed with some of the best chefs, butchers, and artisan bakers in the world. Many of these professionals have experience working with state-of-the-art equipment and advanced techniques. However, we also have staff with limited training and experience, so ease of use and trainability of equipment must be considered.

**Customer-centric.** Who is your customer and what are their needs and wants? Always use this as your guide for each decision along the way – both small and large.

**Ease of movement and flow.** Ease of movement in your back-of-house space is important, particularly if you have a smaller footprint. Think about the movement of the product from storage such as freezer, fridge or storeroom) to prep area (tables/underbar/mixer/prover), cooking areas (convection oven/combi steamer) and serving areas such as display cases and counters. Your equipment must fit in with your space and make the flow easy, intuitive, and efficient.

**Product offering.** Keep it simple. Do a few products that are excellent rather than lots of products that are average. If your product is good, people will travel for it.

**Save time and money.** Look for equipment and techniques that save time and money, reduce labour and waste, and increase efficiency and production, such as blast chillers and freezers that allow for bulk cooking and rejuvenating when required. Retarder provers allow you to pre-produce for the next day, so when you arrive in the morning, your product is ready to be baked. **SR**



**Ann Baker-Keulemans** writes on topics related to business, lifestyle, technology, and health, with extensive knowledge on the SA retail and wholesale landscape. Contact [annbk@wilkinsross.co.za](mailto:annbk@wilkinsross.co.za) | [www.wilkinsrossglobal.com](http://www.wilkinsrossglobal.com)







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# Go with the grain

## How grains and pulses stay consistently relevant to South African shoppers

**W**heat and maize remain staple products for South African consumers. Given their versatility this is unsurprising, and they, along with other grains and pulses, continue to find their way into millions of shopping baskets across the country. Innovative and exciting products drive renewed interest in these categories, while tried and tested favourites remain the basis for most sales.

The multiplicity of options alone keeps these categories relevant. From dried and canned pulses such as peas, beans, lentils, and chickpeas, traditional maize favourites, instant maize porridges in a variety of flavours, a massive range of grain-based cereals, rough-milled grains, speciality flours,

heat and eat rice pouches, traditional and new-school maize meal options, and basic bread to artisanal bread loaves, the choices for consumers are endless.

### Quality and sustainability

When one looks at the range of products covered by grains and pulses, the significance of grains and pulses to consumers cannot be underestimated – for those eating more plant-based food, for vegans and vegetarians, as accompaniments to meat, fish and poultry, as staple favourites, for consumers looking for budget-friendly stomach filling nutrition, and for basic subsistence for those who are not food secure.

### Understanding the categories

**Grains.** Grains include wheat, rice, oats, oatmeal, rye, corn, barley, millet, quinoa and popcorn. Products made from grains include bread, pasta, noodles, samp, breakfast cereals, couscous and tortillas.

**Pulses.** A pulse is a dried edible seed from a legume plant. They include all varieties of lentils, chickpeas and split peas, baked beans, kidney beans, soy beans, haricot beans and mung beans. Products made from pulses include dhal, tofu, hummus, lentil soup and falafel.



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For all of us, at the heart of it all is the question of quality, without neglecting the importance of sustainability. Just how do we ensure a steady supply of high-quality grains and pulses? And why is that so important for retailers and wholesalers? Through a combination of technology, research and development, and improved land management practices, these two critical concerns are being supported by local and international players.

**Quality control**

From seed to crop to final product, quality should be a top priority. Assuring quality requires buy-in from seed suppliers and farmers right through the milling, packing, and production pipeline, and all the way to food retailers and wholesalers. A failure at any stage to safeguard the quality of a product will result in a negative effect on consumer trust, potentially impacting everything from a brand's standing with shoppers to the good reputation of the seller.

As a retailer or wholesaler, corporate retail group, franchise or formal independent, it is up to your team to do your due diligence on your supply chain, and to constantly monitor your products for quality and food safety standards. Word of mouth and the speed and power of social media mean that taking your eye off this particular ball could have disastrous consequences for retailers and manufacturers – and when it comes to private label, the retailer will take the rap from consumers.



Nativa is a hybrid carrot variety from Sakata that is an excellent choice when it comes to summer production. Nativa is vigorous, has resistance against powdery mildew and alternaria, making it a perfect choice for areas where these diseases are known to cause problems. <https://sakata.co.za/vegetable-seed/>



Sakata Rhapsody, a hybrid salad tomato, thriving at Eikenhof Agri-park has an exceptional disease resistance with the promise of high yields, top-notch fruit quality and a longer shelf life. Whether grown in open fields or under shade nets, Rhapsody proves its adaptability.



The Red Rookie hybrid cabbage is a variety that has proven its worth over many years. It has a beautiful, deep purple-red colour – both internally and externally. It can be grown for baby cabbage but, left in the field, it can grow up to a 1,5 to 2,5kg head. It is excellent due to its reliability, versatility and adaptability to various climatic conditions, with a very long shelf life. <https://sakata.co.za/vegetable-seed/>

At the seed level, companies such as Sakata are taking quality control very seriously. Sarah Schulze, Logistics and QA Manager at Sakata Seed Southern Africa, explains the vital role of seed quality testing in agriculture. She says, "Seed quality testing is done to ensure that the germination potential of the seed lot is good enough for sale. It plays a key role in the output of a seed lot – you can't sow a poor-quality seed lot

and expect miracles, even with the best farming or harvesting practices in the world. The quality of the seed they use is extremely important to our customers."

It's for this reason that Sakata's Seed Quality Laboratory in South Africa recently became ISTA accredited. This International Seed Testing Association accreditation allows them to issue Orange International Certificates (OICs) for seed lots, which aids in exports into Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, among others.





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- **Improves digestion**
- **Healthy Weight Management**

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ISTA accreditation is an international gold standard when it comes to guaranteeing seed quality.

Schulze says, "South Africa is governed by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development's (DALRRD) published and gazetted Plant Improvement Act (PIA) regulations. Table 4 of PIA ensures that minimum germination and physical purity standards are in place to protect farmers. ISTA rules are used in South Africa by DALRRD and most registered seed companies, including Sakata, to ensure quality is tested in a standardised and accurate way."

She adds, "Sakata also utilises stringent internal standards to dictate the quality of seed we supply as we believe in our seed's quality and reliability."

At a product level, agencies such as Leaf Services work to ensure that quality follows through. The Pretoria-based company was established in 2015 with the goal of providing "cost-effective and innovative inspection, grading, and sampling for official quality assurance services to businesses across South Africa that are producing a variety of grains, oilseeds and grain products intended for sale."

A DALRRD assignee, Leaf Services undertakes inspection, grading, and sampling quality control services for a range of products, including grains such as maize, rice, sorghum, soya beans, wheat, dry beans and pulses, and a variety of maize, wheat and grain products.

This quality assurance partnership works to help producers enhance their contribution to the national priorities of sustainable food security, while also ensuring a top-quality product.



AGT Foods Africa believe in making the most of everything nature provides, with nothing going to waste. The stalks from popcorn are repurposed into birdfeeders, supporting local wildlife. AGT are committed to sustainable farming and production methods by ensuring every part of their crops are used, promoting a healthier planet. <https://agtfoods.co.za/>

### Can you climate-proof a crop?

Biotechnology is already impacting crop farming, and that impact is set to grow. As the negative effects of climate change and disease wreak havoc on global crops, the need to future-proof these crops has become undeniable. With research and investment ramping up, agriscience is stepping into the limelight.



Wendy Sronic, Corteva Agriscience

Wendy Sronic, writing for Corteva Agriscience on biotechnology in agriculture, says ...

“ We are at a critical inflection point for gene editing. Social acceptance of the technology is on the rise, regulatory policies are emerging and clarifying, and both large and small companies are using the technology in their product pipelines. All at a time when there's a growing focus on the urgent need to climate-proof crops and feed a growing world population on less land. ”

Locally, Grain SA reported on the formation of the Wheat Breeding Platform (WBP) as far back as 2014. The aim of the WBP has always been the national priorities of sustainability and food security. The initiative is coordinated by Grain SA, but, says the group, "Numerous role-players are involved, including industry, breeding companies,



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researchers and government. The WBP incorporates experts from both the public and private sector to assist local breeding efforts for improved yield. The WBP is working to strengthen local breeding efforts through research aimed at providing access to improved genetics and higher-yielding, locally adapted germplasm. Funding from the Department of Science and Innovation and the SA Winter Cereal Industry Trust (SAWCIT) provided opportunities for an increased and more efficient use of resources through aligning national and regional activities and pooling financial resources.”

Stewardship of the land is another buzzword gaining traction. Iowa-based farmer Bill Belzer has spent many years at Corteva Agriscience. He says ...



Bill Belzer,  
Corteva Agriscience

“ For decades, agricultural innovations have driven increases in productivity, efficiency and quality of the crops and livestock that farmers grow. Along with those increases, farmer commitments to stewardship of those technologies, land and water resources, crops and animals, and their communities have also grown. ”

In South Africa, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development recognises the important role of agriculture in economic development and its vital contribution to food security and poverty reduction.



<https://agtfoods.co.za/>

“ Sorghum and cowpea as well as many indigenous cereals and pulses tend to grow well in arid and semi-arid areas where other crops fail. ”

### Be a bean (and pulses) champion

Pulses are a vital component of a sustainable and secure food basket. On 20 December 2013, the 68th session of the UN General Assembly passed an adopted resolution declaring 2016 the International Year of the Pulse. In 2018, the United Nations General Assembly declared February 10 as World Pulses Day to emphasise the importance of pulses to mitigate food challenges, improve soil health, and ultimately improve human health.

Sudeep Singh Rawat wrote in the Business Standard that, “The aim is to spread awareness about the use of pulses in daily diets and explore different types of dishes made up of pulses which are the main ingredient. In many countries, pulses are a staple food which are consumed as a part of their daily diet. World Pulses Day is an opportunity to highlight the challenges of food systems and to figure out potential solutions like increasing pulse production and enhancing nutritional quality.”

There are many reasons to champion these not-so-humble powerhouses. Pulses, including dried beans, chickpeas and lentils, are nutrient-rich sources of protein and amino acids. They’re also good for the environment (they increase soil fertility rather than depleting the ground of nutrients) and are relatively easy to grow locally.

In fact, many indigenous cereals and pulses such as sorghum and cowpea tend to grow well in arid and semi-arid areas where other crops fail, according to researchers at the University of Pretoria.

Grain SA says, “The growing of dry beans should be strongly considered as an option for both small and large growers, given the high value of the crop compared with other dry-land and irrigated crop options at the current prevailing Safex futures prices. It can be used as a useful crop within a planned rotation system.”





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## The future of South African agriculture seems bright

The major players in local agriculture are at the forefront of the drive to achieve sustainability and food security. And there's no mistaking the mammoth task ahead of these farmers and producers. Giving them a platform on which they can stand are aspects that include ...

- Investment into research and development.
- A growing acceptance of the need for aggressive and agile biotechnologies and smart solutions.
- Buy-in from national government and multinationals such as Sakata and Corteva.
- Vital support of local retailers and wholesalers.

'Proudly South African' is not simply a catchy phrase – it's a mentality that has, more often than not, seen us through the toughest times. It's fair to say that remaining proudly South African is the only way forward – supporting the local economy and grains and pulses that are locally-grown, locally produced and locally manufactured.

## Harnessing the power of Brassicas!

AGT Foods Africa is diving into the world of Brassicas, the unsung heroes of soil health and crop vitality! From soil regeneration to pest management, brassicas are truly nature's multitaskers, playing a crucial role in agricultural ecosystems.



### Soil regenerators

**Biofumigants:** Brassicas like mustard and radish release natural compounds when their tissues break down, suppressing soil-borne pests and diseases.

**Deep root systems:** Taproots of brassicas penetrate deep into the soil, breaking up compaction and improve drainage for healthier root growth.

**Nutrient cyclers:** As brassicas decompose, they release valuable nutrients, enriching the soil and promote nutrient availability for subsequent crops.

### Crop rotation champions

**Disease breaks:** Rotating with brassicas interrupts pest and disease cycles, reducing reliance on chemical pesticides and promoting long-term soil health.

**Weed suppressors:** Dense canopy and allelopathic effects of brassicas outcompete weeds, naturally suppressing their growth and minimising herbicide use.

**Nutrient boosters:** By enhancing soil fertility and structure, brassicas set the stage for improved yields and healthier crops in future rotations.

### Biodiversity builders

**Pollinator magnets:** Brassica flowers attract beneficial insects like bees and butterflies, supporting pollination and boosting crop yields.

**Microbial allies:** Root exudates of brassicas feed beneficial soil microbes, fostering a diverse and resilient soil microbiome. <https://agtfoods.co.za/>

## HMR and Ready-to-Eat: Adding pulses adds value

As a cost-effective alternative source of protein, pulses and legumes can be included with confidence in home meal replacement (HMR) and ready-to-eat offerings, as well as in deli dishes and other convenience offerings. A concerted effort to promote these products through marketing, advertising, and experiential shopping activations

will stimulate interest as more consumers recognise the benefits. Cash-strapped shoppers are looking for ways to ease the financial burden of feeding themselves and their families nutritious, filling foods; younger consumers appreciate a shopping experience that is fun and engaging; and customers who are short on time and motivation are attracted to easy and convenient solutions that answer their needs.





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### Plant-based diets continue to thrive

ProVeg International recently noted that over 60% of the food set to be served at the Paris Olympics (26 July-11 August 2024) will, for the first time, be plant-based. Acclaimed chefs Akrame Benallal, Alexandre Mazzia, and Vincent Gillot are in charge of feeding over 10 000 athletes and associated teams at the games and in the Olympic Village.



Alexandre Mazzia



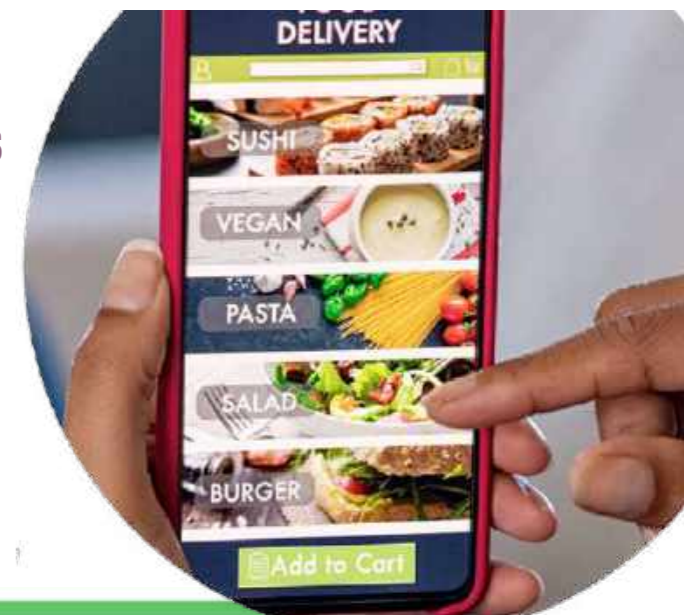
Akrame Benallal

The plant-based approach is aimed at reducing the event’s carbon footprint and promoting health. While the science behind plant-based diets for top athletes is new and there’s a lot left to be studied, for tennis great Novak Djokovic, F1 legend Lewis Hamilton, and professional road cyclists Michael Storer and Michale Woods, the benefits of a plant-based diet are impossible to ignore.

Regular consumers are also noting the positive impact of a plant-based or flexitarian diet. From a happier gut to less inflammation, fewer food intolerances, and an overall improved sense of well-being, plant-based diets do seem to have a lot to offer. Additionally, they’re better for the environment for the most part.

### The 2023 ProVeg review of the plant-based offerings at South Africa’s top fast-food franchises

Fast-food chains across the globe are jumping on the decision to include more plant-based options on their menus. South Africa is no stranger to this, with a variety of Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) targeting vegan, vegetarian, and flexitarian consumers. As a food awareness organisation, ProVeg South Africa sought to assess the plant-based fast-food landscape by means of an annual Plant-Based Fast-Food Ranking. The 2023 ranking is the second version of the ranking. The purpose of the annual ranking is to encourage consumers and QSRs alike to choose and supply more plant-based options, as well as to provide QSRs with insights into how to better perform in the plant-based industry.



2023		
Rank	Restaurant	Score
1	Kauai	18.88
2	Simply Asia	17.32
3	Panarottis	13.62
4	Nando’s	10.22
5	Burger King	9.31
6	Spur	9.14

2022		
Rank	Restaurant	Score
1	Kauai	10.50
2	Spur	8.50
3	Panarottis	8.00
4	Burger King	7.00
5	Simply Asia	7.00
6	Steers	5.25

Click here to download the full ProVeg review

There are also humane and ethical considerations at play, as well as cultural and religious preferences. To top it all , the price of animal-based proteins continues to rise. Together, these factors are driving a steady move to a more plant-based way of life for many consumers.

South African meat-alternative producers celebrated this year when the Johannesburg High Court overturned the South African government’s ban on plant-based meat alternatives. The ruling allows ‘meaty’ names like sausage, burger, and steak to be used on meat-alternative products.

This is a win for producers and consumers alike and is making life easier for retailers and wholesalers who had entered the plant-based market and were tasked with finding increasingly creative ways to name their products.

One of the keys to plant-based food is convenience. Offering a good range of plant-based replacements for meat products and ingredients is as important as having a variety of plant-based ready-to-eat, heat and eat, and HMR options available. The versatility of grains and pulses make them ideal solutions for HMR and your deli counter.





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### This tiny grain is becoming a staple in healthy diets

Dehusked millet is simply the grain with the outer hull removed, making it easier to cook and digest. This superfood is drought-resistant and thrives in less fertile soil. An ancient grain, it has been a staple in many cultures for thousands of years. Packed with nutrients, it makes a fantastic addition to your meals.

**Nutrient-rich:** It's loaded with vitamins, minerals & antioxidants.

**Gluten-free:** Perfect for those with gluten sensitivities.

**Versatile:** Use it in salads, soups, porridges, or even as a rice substitute. <https://agtfoods.co.za/>

### Ancient grains in modern times

The ancient grains of millet and sorghum – which have been collected from wild grasses and consumed by humans for thousands of years – are making a comeback as consumers discover their nutritional and health benefits. Indigenous to Africa, millet and sorghum are adaptable to varied soils and climate conditions (rainfall and temperature). For these reasons, environmental justice NGO Biowatch, which works with smallholder farmers, other civil society organisations and government, is encouraging smallholder farmers to grow, harvest, process, eat and share these ancient grains that were once part of Africa's food security.



### Be inspired

Look to international countries such as Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, the US and UK, as well as Singapore and UAE. From investing in plant-based meat alternatives to publishing a nationwide action plan for plant-based foods, these countries have recognised the importance of sustainable and plant-based food solutions and are putting their money where it counts.

Investigating import deals and investing in local suppliers and start-ups is a good place to start when it comes to boosting your plant-based, vegan and vegetarian inventory.

### The challenges and potential of grains and pulses

Price increases on grains and pulses continue to present challenges to manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers and consumers. According to Business Tech (Seth Thorne, 31 May 2024), rice (10kgs)

saw a 35% increase from May 2022 to May 2023, while sugar beans (5kg) increased 34% in the same period. Rice was impacted by adverse (drier) weather conditions from El Niño in Southeast Asia and floods in southern Brazil. Cake flour (10kgs) increased by 2%, while maize (30kg) reduced by 7% in the period under review.

According to Neha Ghai, Director of Research, Grocery Doppio, solutions for retailers and wholesalers to mitigate the effects of inflation include category optimisation (streamlining



Neha Ghai, Grocery Doppio

your current range, introducing new categories) and dynamic pricing to reflect changing market conditions as they occur.

Offering more value, promotional pricing, promotional offers, bulk discounts, product alternatives and private label alternatives are also effective in countering inflation. Other strategies include reducing margins or holding margins steady, improving the shopping experience and always putting your customers first. **SR**

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# Kesko – the Finnish model

**In Baltic and Scandinavian countries, Kesko stands out among all commercial chains. It offers an ethical vision of shopping, ensures quality goods and services, but charges when signing for its loyalty card!**

Life is good in Finland! Noted for its freezing winters, for its inhabitants' passion for hockey and coffee consumption of up to eight cups of medium roast per day, for an impeccable educational system and for the famous Nokia phones. It is known for its global leadership in the Human Development Index – Finland is an advanced country, with a solid and constantly expanding economy.

## Finland, a great country to live in

The country joined the United Nations in 1955, the European Union in 1995, it is now also a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as from 2023. It is the only Nordic nation to have adopted the Euro to replace its original currency (the Finnish Marco, which had been in force from 1860 to 2002).

Crystal clear water, clean air and walks in the woods make the life of the approximately 6 million Finns a combination of a healthy nation, but also a wealthy one – Finns enjoy a respectable GDP per capita, which touches \$44 500 (South Africa GDP per capita \$6 766).

About 80% of the sale of food and drinks in Finland, are sold by large Finnish chains and Kesko holds a market share just below 40% of the total



Jorma Rauhala, CEO of Kesko (born in 1965), has been in the company since 1992.



Former headquarters of retail giant Kesko in the Katajanokka district east of central Helsinki, Uusimaa (Finland), designed by Toivo Paatela and completed in 1940. Kesko still retains a grocery store in the building which also includes studio apartments and other businesses since its renovation between 2014–19.



Old Kesko village store in Yttilä, Satakunta.



Kesko headquarters in Kalasatama, Helsinki, Finland. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>



Artist's impression of a new K-Citymarket hypermarket store in Kivistö, Vantaa, the fifth hypermarket in Vantaa, the fourth biggest city in Finland – part of the Helsinki metropolitan area. The premises will host the K-Citymarket and some 20 other commercial facilities, as well as integrated housing. <https://www.kesko.fi/>



K Citymarket, Kuopio, Kolmisoppi. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>



K Citymarket, Seinäjoki, Päivölä. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>





Serves: 4  
Preparation time: 15 minutes  
Cooking time: 35 minutes

## GOLDI, COUNTY FAIR, FESTIVE or MOUNTAIN VALLEY CHICKEN THIGHS

### INGREDIENTS

#### Chicken:

30ml olive oil  
8 chicken thighs, seasoned with salt and pepper  
2 shallots, sliced  
3 garlic cloves, crushed  
30g butter  
500g portobello mushrooms, halved  
80g chorizo sausage, thinly sliced (optional)  
100ml white wine  
100ml chicken stock  
1 tin chopped Italian tomatoes  
5ml brown sugar  
salt and pepper  
2 tins cannellini beans, drained and rinsed  
fresh basil

# CHICKEN CASSOULET

Make this easy chicken cassoulet (a French classic) next time you don't feel like doing lots of dishes.

#### Method:

Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan and brown the chicken pieces on both sides. Remove from the heat and set aside.  
Add the shallots and garlic and cook for a few minutes. Remove from the pan and add to the chicken.  
Heat the butter in the same frying pan and cook the mushrooms until they're dry and starting to brown. Season and add the sliced chorizo sausage to the mushrooms. Cook for 1 minute.  
Add the chicken and shallots back into the pan. Add the wine, stock, tomatoes and sugar. Season well and place the lid on the pan.  
Reduce the heat and simmer for about 20 minutes until the chicken is almost cooked.  
Add the beans and cook without the lid on low heat until the sauce has thickened and reduced, and the chicken is cooked.  
Garnish with fresh basil and serve with a crusty French baguette.



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country sales. But, for Finns, what are the favourite destinations relatively to everyday shopping? Where do they go to spend their income?

## Kesko in brief ...

- Biggest trading sector operator in Finland, one of the biggest in Northern Europe
- Profitable growth strategy, 3 divisions, 1 800 stores in 8 countries, extensive digital services
- Founded in 1940, Kesko has branches in Sweden, Norway, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Denmark and Poland.
- One of the most sustainable companies in the world since 2005 (Global 100)
- Strong financial position with good dividend policy
- Market cap in 2023 – €7,1 billion/R135 billion and listed in the Nasdaq Helsinki exchange
- With 159 000 shareholders, K Group employs some 45 000 people in total.
- Is involved in the food trade, in the building / technical trade and the car trade
- Kesko and K-retailers together form K Group, which is the biggest trading sector operator in Finland and one of the biggest in Northern Europe. K Group's retail sales in 2023 totalled some €16 billion (R315 billion).
- Sustainability is encouraged throughout the whole value chain, from production to customer choices. The focus areas are climate and nature, value chain, people and good governance.



Valokuva K-Supermarket Kampppi. <https://nicelocal.fi/helsinki/s>



K-Citymarket store of the Viiri shopping centre in Klaukkala, Finland. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>



K Citymarket, Vantaa, Myyrmäki. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>



Valokuva K-Supermarket Kampppi. <https://nicelocal.fi/>



Valokuva K-Supermarket Kampppi. <https://nicelocal.fi/>



K-supermarket Vuosaari. After a small renovation, their flour bakery, sushi bar and salad bar got more visibility.

**Unlike Mediterranean Europe, Finns prefer large stores. Kesko's 'K-CityMarket' format ranges between 7 000m<sup>2</sup> – 10 000m<sup>2</sup> with assortments from Food to Footwear.**





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## The food sector

**K Group** is the second biggest grocery trade operator in Finland. Some 900 independent K-retailers ensure good customer experiences for 1.2 million daily customers at K Group's 1 200 grocery stores. Over 700 of the stores also offer online grocery services, also with fast deliveries in collaboration with Wolt. Its brands are ...

**K-Citymarket** is a modern, Finnish hypermarket that offers its customers extensive selections of food and home and speciality goods. K-Citymarket is known for its inspiring selections and services, excellent food expertise and easy shopping experience in 81 locations throughout Finland.

**K-Supermarket.** Two hundred and fifty K-Supermarkets build the selections of their stores together with their personnel according to the local customer base, offering plenty of local products and specialities. Their trading principles include versatile selections, acting responsibly and offering the best

**K-Markets** are distinctive, service-oriented, local neighbourhood stores – the village stores for the modern age. K-Markets (750 stores) offer their customers diverse selections of food and local services to conveniently suit their everyday lives.

**Kespro** is the leading foodservice provider and catering wholesale company in Finland. Kespro with 13 cash-and-carry stores, as well as an online wholesale store, acts as a partner to its customer companies and municipalities with a selection that includes fresh foods, processed foods, home and speciality goods, wine and alcohol.

**K Group** and **Neste K** service stations convenience stores serve customers under the 'Tactics for Better Stops' service slogan. Sixty-five forecourt stores offer an incomparable service station experience and the best food for those on the move on the highways.



Top: High quality cuts and sausages at Makuliha's new service point at K-supermarket in Mankkaa!.

Left: Plant based meats at K-Supermarket Kamppi.

Right: Vegan cheese aisle at K-Supermarket Kamppi.



**The Finns benefit from a very good quality of life, as reflected in every choice of theirs. On the shelves, they seek and demand maximum quality.**

**Purchasing principles:** Kesko wants to cooperate with its suppliers and their subcontractors on a systematic, long-term basis to ensure the ethical quality of their products.





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- Saves time of up to 15 to 25 mins per cashier per day
- No need for preparation & count cashier floats



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- Faster payment transactions & reduced queues
- Faster & easier staff training reducing on-boarding time by up to



## AUTOMATICALLY IDENTIFY COUNTERFEIT NOTES

- Eliminate counterfeit acceptance by up to



## ENHANCE IN-STORE SECURITY

- No need for handling cash transactions
- Reduced risk of robbery/burglary
- Create safer work environment for your staff



## REDUCE CASH LOSSES

- Eliminate errors in change provision
- Reduce risk of cash shrinkage by up to





## The built environment

The building and technical trade division operates in eight countries: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Denmark. The brands include ...

**Onninen** (130 stores) All countries: Offers an extensive selection of products and service packages to contractors, industry, infrastructure building and retail dealers.

**K-Rauta** (140 stores) In Finland and Sweden. As a home improvement chain K-Rauta offers products and services for building, renovation, yard and garden, interior decoration and home furnishing.

**Byggnakker** (90 stores) Norway: A leading operator in the building and home improvement trade in Norway, especially in B2B (business to business) trade.

**K-Bygg** (50 stores) Sweden: Serves mainly professional builder customers. It offers a wide selection of products for building, renovation, interior decoration and home furnishing.

**K-Senukai.** Kesko Corporation's joint venture Kesko Senukai is the leading building and home improvement operator in the Baltics and one of the leading online store operators in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

**OMA.** In Belarus, building and home improvement trade operations are handled by the joint venture Kesko Senukai. OMA is the largest building and home improvement store chain in Belarus serving both professional builders and consumers.



Kesko and Oriola-KD are powerful brands in Scandinavia and hope to grow bigger through their new joint venture. Oriola is a pharmaceutical wholesale company, providing a wide range of medicines as well as health and wellbeing products. <https://uk.fashionnetwork.com>



**Hyvis award.** Hyvis sweet pepper and lentil soup was selected the winner of the Food and Beverage category in the Most Sustainable Product in Finland competition. Hyvis soups are made flexibly when waste ingredients are available. Developing food waste products is part of K Group's activities to halve the amount of food waste. The product line includes the Hyvis tomato and cheese soup. <https://www.kesko.fi/>



In 2023 Kesko acquired Davidsen Koncernen A/S, one of the largest builders' merchants in Denmark. The acquisition marks Kesko's first step into the Danish market and gives it a solid foothold in the local building materials market. It also further advances Kesko's objective of strengthening its market position in Northern Europe. The Davidsen family will remain as a 10% minority shareholder in the company.



Kesko plans to gradually increase the number of electric vehicles used for transport and deliveries in its grocery trade business to some 200 EVs by 2030. EV charging points for heavy vehicles will be built in all Kesko's grocery trade logistics centres within the next few years. Kesko's grocery trade logistics centres send out some 700 loads across the country every day. Kesko expects EV transports to reduce emissions significantly while improving efficiency. The total investment will amount to nearly €10 million. In addition to the central warehouse in Vantaa, Kesko has regional logistics terminals across the country, which handle deliveries to some 1 200 grocery stores and thousands of Kesko foodservice customers. <https://www.kesko.fi/>





Zipporah Moraa Ombiro sorting Fairtrade roses into bunches. Photo: Vincent Owino, Reilu kauppa ry/Fairtrade Finland. <https://www.kesko.fi/>

## Onninen's partnership chains

**The Elfin chain** is a national network of independent electrical contractors. The Elfin chain offers electrical products and services with more than 300 independent electrical contractors across Finland.

**The Hanakat chain** is a retail network of independent HEPAC (heating, plumbing, sanitary, air conditioning and refrigeration products) entrepreneurs in Finland. The chain comprises around 80 independent entrepreneurs who offer their HEPAC solutions and overall services to consumers.

**The Elfag chain** is one of Norway's biggest electrical contractor chains. It includes around 120 business members.

## The car trade

Kesko represents leading car brands such as Volkswagen, Audi, SEAT, CUPRA, Porsche and Bentley.



In a circular economy collaboration that has just been launched with L&T and Sinituote, the buckets used for storing cut-flowers that accumulate at K-stores will be used as a raw material in the manufacture of cleaning products. Coffee grounds are also used to make flower soil. <https://www.kesko.fi/>



### K Group's discarded workwear is given a new life as fibre.

In a circular economy cooperation project with Touchpoint and Rester, discarded workwear is recycled at K Group and converted into a new raw material for textiles. The stores included in the cooperation have more than 20 000 employees, so a considerable amount of workwear is consumed.

Potential uses for the fibre are currently being sought. In the future, the raw material may end up as an interior decoration product or a new piece of clothing. Rester's textile recycling plant in Paimio is unique in Europe and offers the largest capacity in Northern Europe for recycling business textiles. In addition to fibre suitable for the textile industry, Rester is looking for other innovative solutions for various interior design and construction products.



**EcoFlowerBox** by Stora Enso Packaging Solutions was developed together with tulip grower Partaharjun Puutarha. They developed a leak-tight, cost-effective, flower packaging, that is sustainable, suitable for the logistic chain and easy to use. It's a box made from corrugated board, consisting of 97% renewable materials. It's square, instead of round and stackable to optimise for transport.

In storage, the boxes can be kept flat. They are quick to erect and need neither tape nor glue. For safe flower transport, the EcoFlowerBox consists of two boxes in one

**The transport box:** Has a closed top and optimises shipment efficiency since it allows stacking the boxes on top of each other, keeping the flowers protected. Partaharjun Puutarha went from fitting 60 buckets to 75 boxes on one pallet.

**The inner box:** A leak-tight box that can be used as display box in stores. It is durable and holds the water inside because of a barrier on the inner surface of the corrugated board. In cases where the flowers are not transported by pallet and truck, the inner box is enough on its own. Both boxes can be recycled in the paper stream.



After successfully transport testing 10 000 boxes holding flowers with different water levels, Partaharjun Puutarha has now scaled up. Now, a big part of their yearly production of 35–40 million tulips are packed and transported in EcoFlowerBoxes. The EcoFlowerBox has received both a ScanStar and a World Star Award for its sustainable packaging concept. <https://packagingsolutionsstories.storaenso.com/>





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Crayfish in dill sauce. Check it out in the frozen food section.

## Towards the future

**K-Plussa**, the Loyalty Card. For Kesko, its four main stated intentions for the coming years are: digitalisation, customer experience, economic-environmental sustainability and the implementation of loyalty rates.

The widest and most diverse customer loyalty programme in Finland provides K-Plussa customers with benefit from nearly 3 000 outlets.

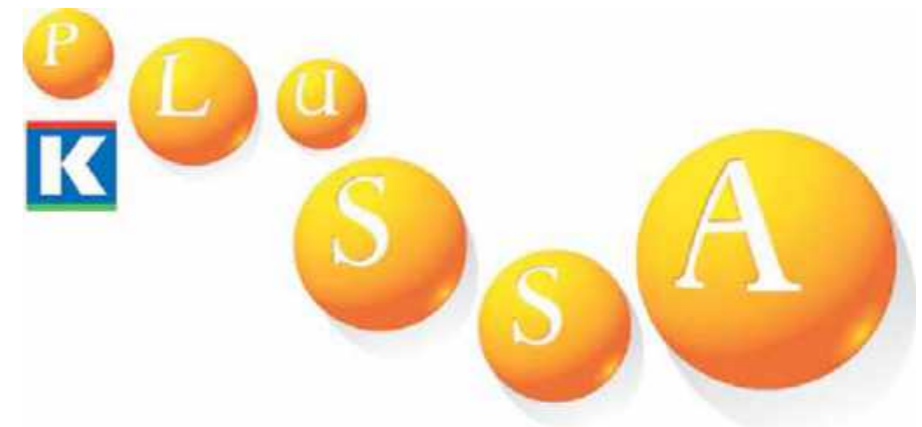
Local K-retailers and K Group chains offer individually targeted special benefits and services to their K-Plussa customers. All K-Plussa customers also get significant price benefits that are available only for customers using a K-Plussa card up to 5% of the value of a purchase. Some products attract a 10% discount.

Three and a half million customers (half of the Finnish population) use their K-Plussa cards and receive benefits from K Group stores and a number of K-Plussa partners' businesses, such as service stations, restaurants, spas and hotels, as well as magazine subscriptions, car rentals, movies, and insurances.

**Pirkka** is K Group's customer magazine which is posted to every K-Plussa household that is an active K Group store customer for a minimum of 10 times a year.



**Hippo Zourides**, serial entrepreneur and corporate leader, has been involved in the food trade for over four decades and consults to corporates, large, medium and small enterprises on a variety of management and restructuring skills, including the latest ESG requirements.



Interestingly, acquisition of the K-Plussa loyalty benefit costs the user a whopping €8.40 (R167). It is obvious that the consumer considers this investment to be worth it, as he/she gets many benefits from such a scheme.

Customers can get their till slips electronically, accumulate points for discounts (one point per Euro spent), and pay electronically for external services. K-Plussa is tailor-made for each customer, identifying their needs and making suggestions for products, recipes and special offers that suit the individual.

Added to this, customers are encouraged to donate points to various charities, ranging from Nuorisuomi (sports for children), UNICEF, WWF 47 (to protect the Baltic Sea), the Finnish union of war veterans and the Finnish association against cancer.

Like many European chains, Kesko focuses on customer service, sustainability and ethical practices. What separates it from the rest however is the excellent execution of its strategies. **SR**



**Antonello Vilardi**, professional in managing points of sale at numerous commercial signs, editorial collaborator for specialised magazines, consultant and lecturer in university masters. He has written books on large-scale retail trade.





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# Bitcoin's meteoric rise

## A context for comparison with the high-stakes balancing act of executive pay



Insights by Dr. Chris Blair  
CEO of 21st Century

**B**itcoin, since its inception in 2009, has been a standout story of spectacular financial gain, especially for those who invested early. From mere cents at its origin, to its peak of almost \$69 000 in November 2021, Bitcoin's return on investment has dwarfed traditional financial instruments. This sort of growth is appealing and, on the surface, seems like a good analogy for rewarding top corporate executives who drive exponential growth in their companies.

In a world where executive remuneration frequently hits the headlines, the debate on whether it should be tethered by independent oversight, even in the face of exceptional shareholder returns, remains fiery. This discussion, often as dynamic and unpredictable as the market performance of Bitcoin since 2012, brings into sharp relief the core question: should there be a cap on how much CEOs can earn, regardless of their performance?

Consider the case of Elon Musk and his \$83 billion pay package, which was a significant multiplier over standard CEO earnings, even within his industry. This massive payout was tied not to a flat salary, but to reaching staggeringly high market

cap, revenue, and earnings targets. To many, this might seem justified – after all, under Musk's leadership, Tesla's market value skyrocketed, akin to the early investors in Bitcoin witnessing their stakes multiply by over tenfold.

However, the Delaware Court ruled this package unfair, primarily due to concerns about the independence of the board that approved it.

This incident opens a Pandora's box on corporate

governance and raises questions akin to those faced by Bitcoin investors: Just because something is immensely profitable, does it also mean it's structured in a way that's sustainable or equitable?

### Bitcoin's meteoric rise: A context for comparison

Consider this: If an individual had invested \$1 000 in Bitcoin when it was priced at \$1 (around February 2011), and held onto it until its peak in 2021, their investment would have grown to approximately \$69 million. The percentage increase here is almost unfathomable in traditional investment terms and serves as a compelling narrative for those advocating for unlimited executive pay based on performance results.

However, there are critical distinctions to be made when comparing the likes of Bitcoin to that of traditional companies like Tesla.



Below: Sulayman360, <https://pixabay.com/>. Above: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/>





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**Market dynamics and volatility:** Bitcoin operates in a decentralised, highly speculative market that is less influenced by traditional economic indicators such as company performance, governance, or macroeconomic policies. Traditional companies, however, operate in more regulated markets and are subject to economic forces, consumer demand, and competitive pressures that make their stock prices less volatile and speculative compared to cryptocurrencies.

**Sustainability and longevity:** Bitcoin's value is largely driven by investor sentiment and market speculation, not by sustainable business practices or long-term strategic planning. In contrast, companies like Tesla are built on tangible products, services, and market strategies. Rewarding a CEO solely based on stock price performance could encourage short-term tactics, such as aggressive accounting, cost-cutting, or other strategies that might boost short-term returns at the expense of long-term sustainability.

**Governance and accountability:** The governance structure in traditional companies involves a board of directors, shareholders, and regulatory bodies that oversee company management and strategy. This structure is designed to balance the interests of various stakeholders, including employees, customers, and shareholders. High executive pay that mirrors the high-risk, high-reward model of Bitcoin investment can undermine this balance, focusing on shareholder returns without regard to other stakeholders.



Ingram Pinn, <https://www.ft.com/>

**Broad economic impact:** Traditional companies have a broader economic impact through employment, innovation, and contribution to GDP.

Tesla, for instance, not only boosts investor portfolios but also affects global automotive and energy markets, employment, and technological innovation. The societal impact of corporate leadership decisions is far more extensive than that of cryptocurrency fluctuations.

### **The case for limits: Governance over greed**

The argument for capping executive pay, even in high-return scenarios, leans heavily on the principle of balanced corporate governance. Critics argue that without independent oversight, pay packages can become disconnected from wider company health or employee remuneration. Imagine a scenario where a CEO is paid a bounty akin to a Bitcoin boom, while the company's foundations – its employees – see little change in their com-

pensation. This disparity can breed resentment and decrease overall morale and productivity.

Further, unchecked executive pay can spiral into excess, with leaders potentially prioritising short-term gains to hit targets linked to their compensation, over long-term company stability. It's akin to a Bitcoin trader

encouraging risky investments without regard to future market conditions, aiming for immediate high returns that may jeopardise future stability.

### **The case against caps: Rewarding the visionaries**

On the flip side, why shouldn't a CEO reap exceptional rewards for delivering exceptional returns? If a leader like Musk can steer a company to valuations that dwarf giants like Microsoft, as noted in the court documents, isn't that worth a princely sum? After all, Bitcoin's astronomical rise wasn't capped – those who saw its potential early on and invested are now sitting on fortunes.

Supporters of high remuneration argue that it attracts top talent who can make bold, transformative decisions – much like investors in emerging technologies like Bitcoin. They contend that capping pay, especially for high performers, could stifle innovation and deter top-tier executives from aiming for truly ambitious goals.



## A middle ground? Finding a balanced approach

Perhaps the real solution lies not in whether we cap or not, but how these packages are structured. Take the Bitcoin analogy: while it offers high returns, it's also volatile and not tied to traditional asset values. Similarly, if executive pay were more dynamically linked to both short-term achievements and long-term company health (including employee welfare and sustainability practices), it could offer a more balanced approach.

Given these differences, the rationale for sky-high, uncapped executive compensation - akin to Bitcoin's returns - becomes problematic. While high rewards for extraordinary performance can be justified, they must be balanced with considerations for sustainable growth, ethical governance, and equitable stakeholder impact.

A more balanced compensation structure might include ...

- Performance metrics that align with long-term strategic goals, not just stock price
- Claw-back provisions that allow companies to reclaim bonuses in the event of later financial restatements or scandals
- Independent oversight could ensure that compensation packages are designed not only to reward sky-high market caps but also to encourage leaders to foster robust corporate cultures, prioritise cybersecurity, and manage other modern risks as highlighted in corporate governance guidelines



- Caps or thresholds that prevent runaway compensation packages based on transient stock market gains.

## Conclusion: Lessons from Bitcoin for corporate governance

In essence, this debate is less about the absolute numbers and more about the principles guiding those numbers. Just as Bitcoin operates within an ecosystem of market forces and technological advancements, executive pay is nestled within a complex system of corporate governance, ethical considerations, and business strategy.

The question of whether to cap executive compensation is a bit like asking if we should limit Bitcoin's price: it's not about the cap, but how we ensure the system is fair, sustainable, and prepared for future challenges. Independent oversight doesn't just put a ceiling on compensation;

it ensures that this compensation is a true reflection of value added to the company in a holistic sense.

Bitcoin's journey offers valuable lessons in market dynamics, investor psychology, and risk management. While the potential for astronomical returns can make a compelling case for similarly structured executive compensation, traditional companies must consider the broader implications of such policies.

Ensuring that compensation packages are crafted with a view toward long-term stability, ethical governance, and equitable stakeholder consideration will help align executive incentives with the overall health and future of the company.

By drawing these distinctions and lessons, we can appreciate the allure of Bitcoin-like returns while recognising the unique responsibilities that corporate leaders hold to their companies and societies.

So, should we cap executive pay, even for high performers? Perhaps the better question is how we make sure these rewards truly align with the long-term health of the companies they lead and the wider ecosystem they influence – ensuring that today's soaring market cap doesn't become tomorrow's cautionary tale. **SR**

This article is based on research conducted by 21st Century, one of the largest remuneration consultancies in Africa. Contact: info@21century.co.za for any further information.





## Effective solutions to reduce the cost of in-store refrigeration

### Polyurethane Injected Panels

- Standard panels: Outer and inner skin of frost white Chromodek, also available in black finish.
- Polyurethane injected panels for superior insulation and adhesion.
- High-impact PVC interlock profiles on all edges provides totally sealed insulation and a perfect vapour barrier.
- Tongue and Groove panel options available.
- Easily erected.
- Optional skin finish in Stainless Steel – Grades AISI 304 AIS 403.

## Cold & Freezer Rooms



### Floors – Fabricated and Concrete

#### Fabricated Floors

- The inside floor finish is 1.5mm Aluminium tread plate glued and screwed to a marine ply base.
- Galvanised plate options available in lieu of the Aluminium Chequer Plate finish.

#### Concrete Floor

- Concrete floors are used for flush or step-up entry and in permanent structures. Usually a recess of 150–170mm is used to accommodate the foam slab insulation and the concrete screed.



### Meat Rails

- Hot Dipped Galvanised system.
- Support structure integrated into insulated panels.
- Optional free-standing continuous galvanised system with bends and switch gear.

### Aluminium Chequer Plate

- Installed as an option to protect panels from scratches and light impact damage.
- 1.5mm and 2.0mm thick options.
- Standard height 1 250mm AFFL.





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Energy Saving



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## Benefits of Airshield Glass Doors

- Reduce Energy consumption.
- Extend Product shelf life.
- Double Glazed Argon filled void for better insulation.
- Optimal Product temperature.
- Glass doors have an option of Mullion lights. Quoted separate.
- Handles included.
- Up to 40% energy saving.
- Solution for new cabinets or retrofitted on existing cabinets.
- Doors are spring loaded.
- Less cold air spillage – warmer aisles.

## Airshield Glass Doors



## Ways to save

With energy cost rising and food retailers looking to improve the shopping experience environment for customers, Insulated Structures has developed an effective solution to reduce the cost of in-store refrigeration while enhancing the customer experience.

Insulated Structures doors are easy to retrofit on in-store cabinets to reduce the energy required to keep chilled foods at the correct temperature.

Meanwhile, customers are able to clearly see and access the products on offer. Reduced energy requirements means smaller refrigeration plant selection for new stores. These savings will off-set the initial cost of the doors. Up to 40% reduction in refrigeration requirement has been achieved.



Standard Airshield Glass Doors with a Black Frame.  
Heated Hybrid also available in this design.  
Heated Hybrid Glass Doors are fitted with a heater to reduce condensation on the doors in Coastal areas.  
Heated Hybrid is fitted with soft closers.

Premium Airshield Glass Doors.  
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# Growing e-commerce market

## Good for consumers, but will proudly South African brands rise?



**Thomas Kingombe**  
Managing Director & Partner  
& **Vashakha Chopra**  
Project Leader  
BCG Johannesburg

As global e-commerce giants like Amazon, Shein and Temu set their sights on South Africa's growing e-commerce space, local retailers may find themselves feeling the pinch. Will South African stalwarts rise to the challenge, or crumble faced with international competition?

Although South African e-commerce accounts for only 5-7% of the retail sector, it has grown by over 30% annually since Covid-19 due to increased consumer trust and new services like Checkers' Sixty60 grocery delivery service. A similar growth pace is expected over the next five years. Local players Takealot and Checkers have been leaders in a fragmented e-commerce landscape which will see disruption and innovation with the entry of new global players.

### Shein and Temu – rapid inroads made

Chinese brands Shein and Temu have made rapid inroads into South Africa with their extensive, low-priced product ranges, hyper-personalised user experience (UX), and aggressive marketing,

Image by pikisuperstar on Freepik



Shein and Temu were the most downloaded apps on South Africa's Google Play Store in 2023 and 2024 (so far), respectively.

Shein appeals to fashion-savvy consumers by adding about 10 000 styles daily, using advanced analytics to tap into fashion trends gleaned from social media and runways. Website traffic analysis shows that Shein is not only taking market share from local e-commerce players like Superbalist and Zando but also activating a new wave of e-commerce users. Temu, like Shein, has over a million low-cost product listings beyond fashion,

including home goods and electronics. Temu's app also includes gamification, like 'spin the wheel,' with substantial discounts as prizes to make shopping more entertaining.

Despite these initial successes, Shein's and Temu's long-term viability is uncertain. Their lack of local logistics and customer support infrastructure undermine continued loyalty from their customers. Market analysts also estimate that both companies are making significant losses due to high customer acquisition costs and expensive air-shipment from China. They are also involved in long-standing legal/regulatory disputes and issues related to environmental impact, in other markets, which may tarnish their brands amongst conscious buyers.

<https://superbalist.com/>





## Amazon – a bumpy start, but a compelling offering

Amazon launched its co.za website for South Africa in May but faced some launch related operational challenges like stock unavailability, highlighting the complexities of adapting a global model to local market conditions. They, however, seem committed to gaining market share and have partnered with local delivery services and locker pick-up options like Pargo and Pudo to support last-mile logistics. Amazon is also likely to soon link its marketplace to the existing Prime Video subscription to onboard an initial customer base in South Africa.

What Amazon enjoys over local retailers, is a very sophisticated pricing analytics engine adjusting prices every 90 seconds to match competitors on key value products and a parent company that is willing to bear short to medium-term losses to win market share. Their long-term strategy is to drive growth in the region using their time-tested 'flywheel' – an expansive product selection enhancing consumer experience, increasing website traffic and attracting more sellers, who further broaden the product range. The flywheel's growth supports Amazon's low-cost structure, enabling low prices and service guarantees that ensure customer loyalty.

## Established local retailers – must adapt quickly to thrive

Global e-commerce giants entering South Africa changes the game and presents local retailers with an impetus to adapt and thrive. Although

the government's recently introduced tax reforms – taxing clothes bought from international e-commerce retailers in small quantities at the same rate as larger quantities (from July) —may offer some relief to local players, local retailers must still proactively adopt new strategies to compete with these formidable new competitors.

Large retailers can compete head-on by launching or enhancing their marketplaces, much like Takealot and Makro. They can turn into 'superstores' with an expansive online product range or specialise in niche segments, offering unique value propositions like Builders Warehouse. For consumer brands or single-category retailers, joining forces with Amazon can extend their reach, while strengthening direct-to-customer channels via their websites and apps. Meanwhile, investing in physical stores remains crucial to serve the two-thirds of consumers who still prefer in-store shopping.



In various markets, certain local retailers demonstrated successful pushbacks against Amazon's arrival. In Brazil, for example, Mercado Libre fortified its customer base and supplier network, invested

in fulfilment infrastructure, and developed an integrated credit and payment system. Similarly, in the Netherlands, Bol.com enhanced its fulfilment capabilities, localised product offerings, and integrated omni-channel strategies with its parent company, Ahold. These tailored actions kept Amazon's market share in Brazil and the Netherlands to low single digits and these key local players in the game.

In South Africa, Takealot has already sought to counter Amazon's launch with a R39 subscription service offering free delivery and a 'Thanksalot' sale. Checkers has also already responded by launching Checkers Hyper Sixty60 in select areas, providing one-hour delivery on non-grocery items.

To effectively compete, local retailers will need to: invest in key e-commerce enablers; develop dynamic pricing strategies; roll out hyper-personalised loyalty programmes; invest in logistical

infrastructure to reach to remote areas; and maintain strong relationships with suppliers. All these efforts should operate on a flexible, scalable, and modular technology platform to deliver a seamless user experience.

This transformation requires dedicated, autonomous, and agile teams empowered by management to drive change.

By innovating and investing wisely local players may emerge from this onslaught as leaders, continuing to shape the future of South African e-commerce. But one can't afford to wait – this market is moving quickly. **SR**

